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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kerstin Anna Stewart

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Social Influences, Decision-Making, and Career Retention of Novice Teachers

by

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MA, Caldwell University, 2007

MS, Niagara University, 1993

BM, Ithaca College, 1985

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

New teachers bring hope, optimism, and excitement for teaching and learning from their individual preparatory programs to their classrooms at the start of every new school year. However, research indicates a large number of those teachers leave the field of teaching within a 5-year timeframe. The consequence of this loss of professionals has a deep-rooted impact on student achievement and learning. This loss also has considerable career and financial implications for the field of education. The reasons for this exodus are varied and somewhat broad in nature and scope. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of social influence and decision-making for novice teachers in K to 12 public schools in the State of New Jersey. The conceptual framework for this study included the theories of social identity, and social categorization. Using descriptive phenomenology, data were collected from 6 face-to-face novice teacher interviews. The results of this study yielded 5 main themes: teaching responsibilities, social experiences, novice teacher support, organizational decision-making, and career longevity and retention. The study found that across these themes, social influences and organizational decision-making can have a positive or negative influence on novice teacher identity and potentially encourage novice teacher retention. Employers may benefit from this study by tailoring induction and training procedures to meet the voiced needs of novice teachers, creating positive social change in the work environment where new teachers feel welcome to openly contribute and participate as valued members of their workplace community.

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Dedication

My dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my three children, Adam, Matthew, and Rachel, my daughter-in-law, Hillary, and my beautiful, smart, and amazing granddaughter June Rose. However, a special note goes to one. Rachel Elizabeth. Thank you for being my support and strength through this journey, for seeing me through the challenges and joys of my doctoral studies, and for always believing in me. You are beautiful inside and out, and you are the epitome of excellence in teaching. I love you, always. Mom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

At the beginning of each school year, aspiring new teachers, fresh from a plethora of educational preparation programs, enter the teaching workforce with the optimism, hope, and desire of changing the lives of impressionable young learners (Manuel & Carter, 2016). However, Hentges (2012) indicated, “nearly half of all new teachers leave the job within 5 years” (p. 100). The reasons for new teacher attrition, however, are not as transparent as the represented numbers, according to Manuel and Carter (2016). As cited by Gallant and Riley (2014), this epidemic is not unique to North America, as exits of a comparable nature are noted in Australia, Europe, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom (Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Kyriacou, 2001; Santavirta, Solovieva, & Theorell, 2007; Skilbeck & Connell, 2003; Riley, 2011; Rudow, 1999). Gallant and Riley further noted that while retention rates vary by country, the overall rate of teacher attrition is approximately 40% to 50%.

In this study, I investigated and described the lived experiences of novice teachers in relation to social influences, decision-making, and career retention. The current study about the lived experiences of novice teachers in these areas provided needed insight and awareness of the perspectives of these educational professionals that can help to identify possibilities and direction for improving and enhancing retention of novice teachers.

This chapter includes relevant discussion of the key facets of this study, including the following aspects: the background for the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions for the study, the study’s conceptual framework, the

nature of the study, a definition of key terms for the study, the study's assumptions, scope and delimitations for the study, limitations for the study, and lastly, the significance of the study.

Background

Organizational commitment is a crucial component to organizational health and wellbeing and is a potential deterrent in staff-related turnover (Imran, Allil, & Mahmoud, 2017). Teacher turnover is a factor in the discontinuity of student instruction as well as their academic accomplishments. Meyer and Allen's (1991) model of organizational commitment (OC) focuses on three aspects of commitment: (a) affective commitment, (b) continuance commitment, and (c) normative commitment. This model conveys that OC is psychologically based within those three categories for the employee, and as such, employees base their desire to stay or leave the organization accordingly. Teachers are the foundation for organizational success within their respective schools on a daily basis (Imran et al., 2017). Lack of ability to express their needs and their professional opinions regarding organizational functioning within their respective schools might prove to be an important component in personal retention decisions.

Organizational trust fosters an environment that allows for growth of organizational commitment (Pinder, 2008). The "ability to inspire trust" (Lussier & Achua, p. 333) is characterized as a valued leadership trait, and, therefore, the responsibility of growing and developing trust within the educational environment falls to school administrators and other significant school leaders. Organizational trust is directly connected with employee motivation and as such is regarded as a precursor to

organizational commitment as well as a fundamental feature in organizational motivation (Heavey, Halliday, Gilbert. & Murphy, 2011). Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharajan, and Burke (2018) suggested that retention of novice teachers is a major topic of concern for the entire educational community. Retention of quality instructional staff is crucial to the improvement of educational advancement and student achievement (Callahan, 2016).

Many factors contribute to the challenge of teacher retention (Adams & Woods, 2015). These authors indicated that some of the factors might include novice teachers' experiences or feelings of isolation within the workplace, lack of appropriate preparation before entering the workforce, the lack of available resources, lack of complete understanding of the teaching culture or specific environment, or issues pertaining to life and work balance (Adams & Woods, 2015). Adams and Woods further indicated that retention might be related to issues surrounding teacher socialization or lack thereof. Any of the aforementioned aspects could lead to teachers becoming disenchanted with their chosen career. Employment dissatisfaction is a potential forecaster of the retentive potential for the field of teaching (Van Overschelde, Saunders, & Ash, 2017). New teachers who experience job-related successes increase the potential for career and job satisfaction, which in turn promotes overall retention potential (Callahan, 2016).

Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) found that support is critical to new teachers and specifically imperative to their career-related success, as the challenges within the first year are stressful. Kelly and Northrop (2015) suggested that a common response to overly demanding teaching circumstances is for new teachers to leave their employment

situation. This potential exodus of novice teachers has the capability of creating a significant impact on student achievement (Callahan, 2016).

Support of colleagues or peers directly enhances teacher efficacy (Charner-Laird, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul, Watson, & Gordon, 2016). Additionally, teaching practices that are met with collegial support hold the possibility of improved teaching practices (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). Types of practice, such as collaborative planning efforts, decreased the likelihood of teachers' desire to change their school or circumstance (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). In general, the support of peers fosters a true educational community that promotes efforts of collaboration and limits the possibility for novice teachers to feel isolated or alone during their first year of service.

Kelly and Northrop (2015) further indicated school-related interventions on the part of educational administration had a mediating effect on behaviors related directly to novice teacher retention. Positive relationships with educational leadership are a critical component to the integration of novice teachers into the educational community and environment (Elliott, Dainty, & Jones, 2017). Brannan and Bleistein (2012) found perceived social support to be associated with increased job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. Brannan and Bleistein additionally determined connectivity between perceived socially based support measures and employee wellness or wellbeing.

Novice teachers maintain the perception that upon entrance into their newfound profession, they will become a valued asset in the school decision-making process and related procedures (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). However, Muijs, Chapman, and Armstrong (2013) found that new teachers did not perceive themselves to be as included

in decision-making processes as other educational professionals with more seniority. Higher levels of staff turnover are directly associated with teachers who felt as if they held limited contribution to organizational decision-making (Albright, Safer, Sims, Tagaris, Glasgow, Sekulich and Zaharis, 2017).

The current study specifically addressed a gap in the literature that is significant to the field of education. I focused on the perspectives of novice teachers in mixed seniority settings in consideration of social influences and decision-making on novice teacher career retention.

Problem Statement

While there is available ongoing research on the topic of teacher retention in general, new teacher retention in particular (Albright et al., 2017; Bennett, Brown, Kirby-Smith, & Severson, 2013; Charner-Laird et al., 2016; Harfitt, 2015; Kelchtermans, 2017; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017) and high teacher attrition rates continue to plague the field of education. The search for answers to this significant issue is important to the identification of methods, programs, and directions to improve novice teacher retention as well as retain and promote quality teachers (Van Overschelde et al., 2017). Bennett et al. (2013) indicated that teachers are vacating the field of education for a variety of reasons, and additional research is necessary to determine how to better support the teaching force.

Aspiring young teachers enter the field of education with the hopes and dreams of contributing in a positive and influential manner to student achievement, all the while not realizing that the environment can be politically directed and charged (Picower, 2013).

Navigating these circumstances, along with daily teachers' tasks and responsibilities, can prove highly challenging to the novice teacher population. The requirements of novice teaching professionals are numerous and wide-ranging within the first few years of a teaching career. The first year of teacher service can pose many challenges and bring about significant stress that requires levels of support and assistance (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Professional support is critical to new teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017), as unsuccessful new teachers' transition and integration to the teaching environment is a possible determinant in the retention of new teachers (Kane & Francis, 2013).

According to Manuel and Carter (2016), new teachers' opinions and viewpoints are not substantially or typically represented, and that lack of representation contributes significantly to an already existing new teacher perspective of invisibility and nonvalue within the workplace. Novice teachers are commonly placed in the position of working in a variety of socially based circumstances within the first year of their career, such as team-teaching, faculty meetings, union meetings, and professional development training. These circumstances and situations usually take place with a mixture and combination of novice and veteran teachers. Professional respect on emotional and social levels has the power to influence a teacher's decision to remain in the field of teaching (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Additionally, Grossman (2014) indicated that social unity impacts the overall quality of related decision-making. Fostering organizational respect to that end is significant to the development of life-long careers for teachers.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggested that organizations need employees whose commitment levels are more than simplistic conformity. O'Reilly and Chatman further suggested that employee emotional or psychological connectivity to an organization is significant to overall organizational commitment. Proactive awareness of social influences, decision-making, and their consequential bearing on teacher attrition has the potential be an asset for educational leaders in the development of associated supportive measures for novice teachers and ways to strengthen related organizational commitment. van Veelen, Slegers, and Endedijk (2017) suggested that educational school leaders maintain an instrumental position in the endorsement of organizational shared decision-making within the school setting. Information from this study has the potential to arm school leaders with first-hand information on the organization decision-making processes in public-school settings from a novice teacher viewpoint, which in turn could lead to possible restructuring or development of new teacher transitional programs for this particular school and lend support to the educational research to advance practices and further research.

A better understanding of novice teacher perceptions of social influence and the decision-making processes contributed to the research of how these aspects are experienced by new teachers and their view of continuing in the teaching profession. As it appears there was limited available literature regarding novice teachers' experiences and perceptions of social influences and decision-making in mixed teacher seniority settings, this study addressed such as a relevant and significant gap within that literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of social influence and decision-making for novice teachers in K to 12 public schools in the State of New Jersey. The main objective of this study was to better understand these experiences to provide an enhanced perspective for the continued rates of attrition among novice teachers. This perspective provides information for educational leadership to create more focused transitional programming directed toward the expressed narratives of the novice teacher population. A secondary goal of this study was to create awareness of novice teacher perspectives of organizational commitment to provide supportive measures for these teachers prior to their premature departure. Lastly, this study provided a voice for novice teachers and their possible challenges or concerns in the first year of employment. Awareness of these challenges or concerns, sometimes latent or unspoken, might lead to cultural awareness that could improve the disconnect between novice teacher expectations and the reality of the teaching profession.

Research Questions

The following research questions are included in this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of decision-making in the workplace?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): At what point do novice teachers become aware of social influence in relation to decision-making in the workplace?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What role does social influence and group or team-based decision-making play in the novice teacher's perspective to remain in the teaching profession?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study considered the guidance of the following theories as a contextual lens: (a) social identity theory (SIT; Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008) and (b) social categorization theory (SCT; Reicher, Haslam, Spears & Reynolds, 2012). SIT explains individual self-perception based on shared socially derived circumstances (Reicher et al., 2012). Pinder (2008) indicated that individuals organize themselves aligned with social categories that pertain to their environmental situation. Tajfel (1982) suggested that determination of positive or negative social identity is relational and is subject to comparisons to other similarly natured groups. SCT claims that social identities are directly related to individual behaviors within a given group setting, which influences related group-based interactions (Reicher et al., 2012). The SCT purports that individuals have the potential to display several social identities, which potentially influences individual behaviors pertaining to self-conceptualization (Melton & Cunningham, 2014).

A teacher's self-concept is significant to career satisfaction or career fulfillment (Zasympkin, Zborowski, & Shuklina, 2015). Additionally, Nielsen (2016) found teacher identity and self-concept to be essential foundations for communication as well as teacher retention. The SIT and SCT served as conceptual guides for the phenomenological nature of social influence and decision-making and their relation to new teacher's retention

within their teaching career. In Chapter 2, I offer a more defined and detailed explanation of the conceptual framework for this research as it applies to the aforementioned phenomenon.

Nature of the Study

The research for this study was qualitative and used a phenomenological approach. In phenomenological research, the main focus is on the creation of new knowledge from the complexities of the human experience (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). The phenomenological nature of social influence and decision-making and their relation to new teacher's determination to remain in their careers, the central concept of this study, was appropriate to the use of qualitative methodology. In this study, I sought to determine the importance of social influences and decision-making as experienced by new teachers from the individual participant point of view. Data for purposes of this study were collected through face-to-face, one-to-one semistructured interviews (see Saldaña, 2016). The data were analyzed through the use of researcher coding and NVivo software (NVivo, n.d.).

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms and definitions offer clarity of interpretation for the main concepts utilized in this qualitative study:

Affective commitment: Affective commitment (AC) is referred to as the affective or emotional belonging or connection to an organization or group (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Continuance commitment: Continuance commitment (CC) is identified as remaining with an organization or group for purposes of security (Bergman, 2006).

Decision-making: Decision-making is a common undertaking within daily events. In this process, people select options from among various presented choices. To accomplish this goal of decision-making, opinions are voiced, articulated, and channeled through the decision-making process (Rodriquez, Yejun, Martinez, & Herrera, 2018).

Job involvement: Job involvement is defined as the extent to which employees are engaged in cognitive and psychological manner with their employment (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994; Stoner & Gallagher, 2010).

Lived experience: An individual's relation to, understanding of, and meaning applied to a given phenomenon (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016).

New teacher: For purposes of this study, this term refers to a teacher in their first or second year of service as a professional educator in a K to 12 public school setting (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Novice teacher: For purposes of this study, this term maintains the same meaning as novice teacher, above.

Normative commitment: Normative commitment (NC) is an association with an organization or group based on organizational responsibility or related obligation (Bergman, 2006).

Organization: An organization is viewed as a social body that has the purpose of the accomplishment of tasks that cannot be accomplished solely by the individual. Shani, Chandler, Coget, and Lau (2009) stated that an "organization relies on coordinated activities and systems to achieve a common set of goals" (p. 500).

Organizational citizenship behavior: Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is defined “individual contributions in the workplace that go beyond role requirements and contractually rewarded job achievements” (Organ & Ryan, 1995, p. 775).

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment is defined as “acting in a manner that protects the interests of the organization and indicates commitment to the whole of the organization, not to its parts” (Terzi, 2015, p. 350).

Organizational trust: Organizational trust is a multifaceted conception that applies to specified organizational features that promote and encompasses trust within an organizational setting and guarantees that members or the organization will act on behalf of the organization in accordance with that trust (Kars & Inandi, 2018).

Phenomenon: An occurrence or event experienced by an individual (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Social influences: According to Pinder (2008), social influences are the means by which individuals either consciously or unconsciously influence the motivation or attitudes of others.

Teacher attrition: This term is specifically in reference to qualified teachers who leave the teaching field (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Teacher retention: This term in reference to retaining qualified teachers in the field of teaching (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Assumptions

For purposes of this research, I assumed that participants would be forthcoming and genuine in their interview responses. I presumed that the participant would accurately

provide answers that were relevant to their perspective or viewpoint, in keeping with the phenomenological design of the study. The second assumption of this study was that social influences and processes for decision-making were present and recognizable within the educational environment. I presumed that these aspects of the studied phenomenon were not only present but experienced and recognizable to the participants in the study.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this research included first-year teachers within the field of education. This population was chosen as researchers have indicated that “nearly half of all new teachers leave the job within 5 years” (Hentges, 2012, p. 100). Improved retention of the novice teaching force is a major and significant issue for the entire educational community (Schuck et al., 2018). The monetary cost for loss of these teachers is extraordinary (Harfitt, 2015), and the additional cost to the educational community at large is equally as overwhelming (Kelchtermans, 2017).

In this qualitative study, I focused on the population of novice teachers within Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic counties in Northern and Central New Jersey, and therefore was not representative of the novice teaching populations or cultures within the entire State of New Jersey or other areas of the United States. Additionally, I focused on novice teachers in K to 12 public-school settings, which was not representative of other private-based school settings or situations.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that my background as a teacher and educator might pose a potential threat to its dependability. Many important processes were put into

place to protect against this possibility, such as (a) I did not use my own workplace as a study setting for purposes of the research to avoid potential personal, relational issues (see Walden University, 2018c), (b) I used researcher journals and notes for daily reflection on research and keeping biases in check (see Burkholder et al., 2016), and (c) I used a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 70) for purposes of self-awareness within the research as well as to ensure the research quality.

A second study limitation was the use of a one-time interview for research purposes. The intent of the selection of interview as a tool for this research was to extract rich and descriptive data that would provide clarity and give meaning to the central study phenomenon. This interview demonstrated one “snapshot” in time, which in and of itself requires additional research of multiple designs for further understanding of the issues surrounding novice teacher retention.

Significance

This research enhanced the understanding of social influences and related decision-making experienced by novice teachers and their relation to retention within the setting of education. Kane and Francis (2013) discussed the potential impressions foundational teaching years could pose on young and aspiring new teachers. Manuel and Carter (2016) indicated the importance of furthering research to better understand factors surrounding the formation of teacher identity and ultimately the commitment to the field of education. Should a teacher’s primary year include frustration and unsupported challenges, many quality new teachers might decide to leave the teaching profession, creating a lack of continuity in student achievement.

Harfitt (2015) indicated that the exodus of well-trained and qualified teachers would undoubtedly be a costly endeavor for educational institutions and further suggested that approximately 2 billion U.S. dollars are spent on subsequent replacement of those vacated positions (p. 23). Kelchtermans (2017) suggested, however, that mere numbers cannot resolve this issue. Kelchtermans further indicated that teacher attrition has a direct and significant impact on student, school, and community development in general. Kelchtermans argued that teacher attrition and subsequent retention refers to “the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons” (p. 965).

This current research provides potentially valuable insight for educational leadership and administration in the development of programs of support and processes for socialization within the educational setting for teachers. A more complete and thorough understanding of new teachers’ primary career experiences, specifically their perceptions of social influences in group or team decision making situations as related to possibilities of retention, will help educational administrators identify areas of needed new teacher support. Offering new teachers specified support in the aforementioned areas of transition to the workplace in terms of social expectation is important to job satisfaction and the potential to retain young teachers within the field of education.

Additionally, in the State of New Jersey, a teacher is tenured after a timeframe of 4 years, with the first 2 years of service considered to be probationary in nature and scope (New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association [NJPSA], n.d.). According to the NJPSA (n.d.), tenure is a form of protection for teachers within their respective organizations that has been in place for over a period of 100 years. The NJPSA further

indicated that this new mandate was initiated in 2012 as a result of “TeachNJ” (para. 1) or the “Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act” (para. 1). As New Jersey State School Districts are, in fact, organizations by nature, in comparison to other business organizations, this period of newness and subsequent transition is relatively long. Therefore, organizational acceptance will take 4 years (and an additional day, technically) to achieve (NJPSA, n.d.). A novice teacher typically enters their first teaching position with aspirations to become a contributing member of the educational community as well as working toward the improvement of society in general (Manuel & Carter, 2016). This study provides a platform for potential educational reform and related initiatives that allow for increased retention of novice teachers, possible prevention of the loss, and increased retention potential of young, talented, and enthusiastic educational professionals.

Providing relevant data on the lived experiences of new teachers regarding social influences and decision-making offers educational professionals the opportunity to identify possible issues that contribute to a new teacher’s dissatisfaction with their chosen careers and eventually to leave the field. This information yielded the potential for positive social change opportunities within the workplace for these novice teachers and aided in the information essential to the creation of a work environment where new teachers feel as if they are welcome to openly contribute to the educational community and offer themselves as a resource to the entire community as a whole. Positive social change within the field of education enhances the possibility to impact teacher instructional practices and student achievement.

Summary

Kelchtermans (2017) suggested that teachers' decisions to leave their career mark a significant influence on the entire school-based community at large. Kelchtermans additionally suggested that currently there are not identified reasons for the phenomenon of departing teachers. It is important to not only study the reasons as to why teachers leave the profession but also to examine the context surrounding the circumstances (Kelchtermans, 2017). This research offers valuable and in-depth information for educational organizations to aid in paving the way for new teachers and assist in the creation of a foundation that is professional, welcoming, and supportive, thus potentially increasing the possibility for new teacher retention.

In Chapter 1, I provided an introduction to the research topic of decision-making and social influences and their potential impact on novice teacher retention and discussed the appropriateness of a qualitative phenomenological research approach for this study. Further, Chapter 1 featured background discussion regarding the research topic and conceptual framework for the study using SIT (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008) and SCT (Reicher et al., 2012). In Chapter 1, I also discussed the research problem of teacher attrition as both costly and harmful to the educational community in general (see Kelchtermans, 2017). The chapter also addressed the significance of the study in terms of keeping and promoting new teachers in the field of education.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the literature review, which is the foundation for this study. The chapter contains a thorough review of relevant literature and a discussion of a

determined gap within that literature. I also discuss an expansion of the conceptual framework for the current study previously discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 provides information regarding the qualitative methodology for this study, including information about the design of the study and related research methods. I also offer ethical considerations that pertain specifically to the research involved in this study. Chapter 4 offers the results of the study, including discussions of data collection and analysis, and provides the results by theme and research question. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I offer an interpretation of the findings as they apply to each research question, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change related to the findings of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Researchers have indicated that teacher retention has become a notable concern within the past decade (Hentges, 2012). Hentges (2012) further indicated, “Nearly half of all new teachers leave the job within 5 years” (p. 100). Retention of novice teachers is an issue that has significant impact for the entire educational community (Schuck et al., 2018). Schuck et al. (2018) asserted that although there has been substantial research devoted to this important topic, challenges and issues for the novice teacher population remain. Van Overschelde et al. (2017) additionally observed that finding answers as to why novice teachers vacate the field of teaching is critical to understanding how to keep, promote, and preserve superior teachers in the field of education. Van Overschelde et al. (2017) further added that employment dissatisfaction is a significant forecaster of retention within the teaching field. As tomorrow’s children and students will join the workforce within a short period of time, it behooves today’s researchers and society, in general, to involve themselves in the discovery of a path to these answers.

Many aspiring novice teachers enter their first teaching job with optimistic perspectives of facilitating positive change within the classroom as well as within the field of education (Manuel & Carter, 2016). Furthermore, Manuel and Carter (2016) indicated that these new teachers’ viewpoints align with professional and personal principles, suggesting that teaching objectifies the potential to assist in the realization of their career-related goals. The first year of teacher service includes various transitional challenges (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017), which have the potential to make a negative

impression on novice teachers and dissuade them from returning to the classroom (Kane & Francis, 2013). Callahan (2016) claimed that, subsequently, rates of retention are influenced by the levels of teacher-related excellence within their given practice.

Callahan further asserted that as novice teachers experience successes within their career, the likelihood of their retention based on their job satisfaction will increase. As the retention of quality teaching staff is paramount to the opportunity for efforts of reformation to enhance and elevate student achievement (Callahan, 2016), finding ways to increase teacher retention, overall, appears to be an area of importance to the entire educational community.

Retaining Quality Novice Teachers

Elliot et al. (2017) indicated that approximately 22% of all teachers decide to vacate their careers within the first 3 years. Elliot et al. facilitated research based on six elements that directly pertained to first-year teacher relevant experiences. Elliot et al.'s study was based on a conceptual framework created by Su (Su, Dainty, Sandford, Townsend, & Belcher, 2011). The six elements were “educational preparation, teacher commitment, first year teaching experience, skills and abilities, social integration, and institutional factors” (Elliot et al., 2017, p. 3). They found that first-year teachers believed that, among other important factors, institutional support from administration was a key component within their instructional careers (Elliot et al., 2017). Elliot et al. indicated that dedication to the teaching profession is influenced by many factors, specifically teacher-related burnout and general unpreparedness. Even though novice teachers enter their new positions excited to work with their students and impact student achievement,

they still have substantial learning-related requirements necessary for job growth and development. In general, mentors are used in educational organizations to provide support for novice teachers (Stanulis & Bell, 2017). Stanulis and Bell (2017) also stated that the specific type of mentoring offered to a new teacher could be significantly influential in overall novice teacher retention as well as student achievement. Focus on precise areas that support new teacher retention is vital to gaining more detailed understanding of this issue.

Placing value in the novice teacher's voice is an important and critical factor in the retention of this population of teacher and the achievement of the students within their purview (Stanulis & Bell, 2017). This is important to this study, as the first-hand perspective of novice teachers provides significant understanding and clarity of the needs of this population upon entrance to the profession. It could also provide educational leadership necessary guidance in the structuring of subsequent programs, mentoring initiatives, and professional development that will enrich, support, and develop new teacher instructional practices. The experiences and support shared by novice teachers in this study could help to understand more about increasing retention when they identify with the organization and feel associated commitment.

In addition to voice, a number of other factors contribute to teacher challenges and low teacher retention rates (Adams & Woods, 2015). These factors include, but are not limited to, community-related isolation or feelings of isolation, lack of knowledge regarding the teaching environment or culture, the availability, or lack thereof, of teaching resources, and lastly, life balance between career and private lives (Adams &

Woods, 2015). All of these impact teachers at some level and at some point within their teaching career. Adams and Woods (2015) explored strategic interventions from a community perspective that targeted the identification of stressors for the teaching population and centered on community-based socialization focused primarily on supportive measures for teacher recruitment and retention. Adams and Woods evaluated teacher retention from the perspective of socialization and indicated that the circumstances could be comparable to a “social problem” (p. 251). A novice teacher’s perspective regarding this information is significant to the identification of proper and applicable supportive measures to enhance and encourage retention of the novice teacher population.

Social Influences and Novice Teacher Identity

Rice, Volkoff, and Dulfer (2015) indicated that formation of a teacher’s individual teaching or career identity is not something that can be formed in an isolated manner. Establishment of a teaching career identity requires the benefit of experiences along with the social context of the teaching environment to fully and successfully develop (Rice et al., 2015). Rice et al. further indicated that a better and more thorough insight into these context factors and distinctions is necessary to complete the overall big picture for novice teachers within the workplace. Resolution of the initial expectations upon entering the teaching workforce with the reality of the teaching experience is challenging for most novice teachers and can be a detriment to the solidification of a critical professional identity (Rice et al., 2015). Manuel and Carter (2016) suggested

additional research to further comprehension regarding the formation of teacher identity and ultimately the commitment to the field of education.

According to Hentges (2012), retention-related loss of teachers has financial, professional, and career-related implications for all stakeholders. Hentges indicated that the loss of novice teachers creates a vulnerable foundation for student learning and educational continuity. As novice teachers typically enter the teaching field with the intent to have a significant impact on student academic achievement (Manuel & Carter, 2016), it follows that teachers who bring to fruition the goals of positive student development and achievement are more likely to establish longevity within the teaching field (Hentges, 2012). In summation, the reality of the social context of teaching is likely to play a role in the formation novice teacher concepts of professional identity in the workplace.

Employee Voice in Organizational Practices and Decision-Making

The employee voice within a given setting has the potential to advance decision-making processes and general organizational productivity (Donovan, O'Sullivan Doyle, & Garvey, 2016). According to Budd, Gollan, and Wilkinson (2010), there has been an abrupt intensification of interest in employee voice within the workplace as employers compete with large-scale production, and the drive for higher levels productivity spur the need for improvements in methods of communication to that end. Additionally, according to Donovan et al. (2010), employee voice can lead to a decrease in organizational turnover. Workers' decisions to speak up or remain silent are influenced by a variety of organizational facets, and a good number of these facets are management related in

nature and scope. Further, managerial response is critical to employee determinations to either contribute or to remain silent in future organizational endeavors (Donovan et al., 2016). Donovan et al. (2016) indicated that an employee voice is “conditioned by the agendas and institutional structures controlled by management” (p. 566), and, therefore, is not an employee choice. In sum, as it benefits the organization to encourage employee voice, it falls to management to make certain the environment is open and supportive of these novice voices.

Nugent (2017) stated that the narratives from the stories of individuals within the workplace “capture the hearts and minds of employees” (p. 6). Human beings, the most important and vital part of human resources, tend to be “feeling creatures first and thinking creatures second” (Nugent, 2017, p. 6). An employee’s perception of how they feel about their workplace might prove to be a reason to either stay with or leave the organization. Individual voice is one of the most personal parts of a human being, and thus honoring that voice as an integral part of an organization could be significant to that employee’s view of their contributions as a valued member. This is directly demonstrated through the organizational support theory, which holds that employee belief of organization value related to worker contribution and general welfare educes specific positive attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Vardaman, Allen, Otondo, Hancock, Shore, & Rogers, 2016).

Engelbreton (2018) argued that reflection and the process of decision-making is critical to democratic or mutual collaboration. This is particularly relevant to this study as the ability to work in an environment supported in such a manner could be pivotal to a

novice teacher's decision to remain in the field of teaching. As teachers are often considered the curricular gatekeepers (Engebretson, 2018; Thornton, 1991), it would logically follow that their instructional and curricular decisions and related organizational contributions sustain a significant impact upon the student learning and the student achievement within their purview. According to Grossman (2014), social unity is influential in terms of the quality of general decision-making. Manuel and Carter (2016) indicated that new teachers are often discounted in important educational practices related to their work both in curriculum and instruction as well as more formal institutional decision-making procedures. Discounting novice teacher perspectives creates discord or conflict, which can ultimately negate social unification processes and thus cause unproductive organizational behaviors. Sterling, Sinha, and Hill-Briggs (2016) explored inefficient team behaviors resulting from lack of collaboration, confidence, and determination in the decision-making process. This is relevant to the study as the decisions made within the educational organization have direct implications for both the professional and the student population. Sterling et al. concluded that interventions intended to help the processes of collaboration were affected by a variety of socially influential factors. The process of inclusion is important to the longevity of the novice teacher population, and being perceived as an important component of the teaching community is significant to that end (Hentges, 2012). For purposes of this study, understanding how the participants describe their first-hand experiences with inclusion and decision-making at the educational facility or how they might relate social factors to their intent to stay in the teaching profession would yield insight as to their views.

The purpose of this study was to further understand novice teacher experiences with social influence, decision-making and retention within the first or second year of service in a K to12 public school setting in the State of New Jersey. The results of this study provided a first-hand perspective for educational leadership to consider improved related transitional programs that support first-year teachers and their experiences and desire to stay in a teaching career. The review of literature for this study will commence with a discussion of the theoretical conceptualization of the study, followed by a discussion of new teacher's and their first year of service, social influences that impact new teachers, new teacher's and decision-making, and finally, new teacher's and retention in the field of education. The literature review will conclude by summarizing relevant gaps in the reviewed literature and a discussion of how this research will assist in furthering the understanding of the lived experiences of first-year teachers, and how social influences and decision-making processes contribute to that lived experience. This study provides valuable information to educational leadership in terms of insight into transitional programming for new teachers that could help foster a channel of positive communication for new teachers in the first year of their career. Clarity of novice teacher perceptions of social influences and the group decision making processes improves understanding of the effect such processes have on new teacher retention.

Literature Search Strategy

In order to locate relevant and appropriate literature, the following search terms, in various combinations, were used for purposes of this literature review: *decision-making, first-year teacher(s), job involvement, new teachers, new teacher assimilation,*

new teacher retention, new teacher transition, peer support, administrator support, organizational commitment, organizational trust, phenomenological approach, qualitative, social categorization theory, social identity theory, social influence, and teacher transition. The search terms were used in library databases such as Academic Search Complete, EBSCO Host, Education Source, ERIC, Sage Premier, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar, PsycArticles, PsychInfo, and Science Direct. I limited my search to peer reviewed scholarly sources published between 2013 and 2018, with a few significant exceptions.

Theoretical Conceptualization

To form a more complete and thorough understanding of the lived experiences for novice teachers regarding social influences and decision-making, the following theoretical conceptualizations were considered: Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012). These theories provide a foundation that offers facilitation in perceptions of both individual and group behaviors and related procedures (Melton & Cunningham, 2014). According to Pinder (2008), SIT suggests that individuals organize and order themselves according to a variety of socially related categories directly related to their environmental context. Additionally, SIT, developed collaboratively by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, defines intergroup behaviors that lead individuals to define themselves as a shared social entity because of perceived socially founded contexts (Reicher et al., 2012). Tajfel (1981, p. 255; 1982, p. 24) defined social identity as follows, “the part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or

groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership”. Tajfel (1982) further indicated that positive or negative social identity and related status is, for the most part, relational in nature and scope (p. 24), and is subject to comparisons to other groups of relevant or significant nature.

Identity is a culmination of “multiple social, cultural, political, and historical contexts” (Buchanan, 2015, p. 704, Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Buchanan (2015) further indicated that teachers develop their professional identity through past and current experiences, as well as the context of their school-related settings. The development of this professional identity is socially related as a result of the nature of the educational setting, and similar to a personal identity formation. McClellan (2017) discussed identity as a compelling force that drives life decisions and direction. Additionally, early attainment of identity for teachers is significant in affording career-related perspectives in pre-service as well as early teaching years (Harlow & Cobb, 2014). Cummins and O'Boyle (2014) indicated that the development and facilitation of social identity is instinctive where groups and group dynamics are present. For teachers, the creation of a professional identity is complex and has the potential to be impacted by external influences and circumstances (Buchanan, 2015). Thus, the development of novice teacher identity would follow as a significant determinant of teacher career path decisions and the ultimate choice to remain in the field of teaching. Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008) will offer potential guidance for understanding first-year teacher behaviors and related actions during a teacher's first year of service. A first-year teacher might view himself or herself in the category of “new employee”, and that view might

cause them to feel suppressed, or ill at ease in the expression of their professional opinions, potentially leading to workplace or career-related dissatisfaction.

SCT claims that social identities are directly related to individual behaviors within a given group setting. This social identity then impacts subsequent group interactions and reactions (Reicher et al., 2012). Melton and Cunningham (2014) suggested that individuals can have many and varied social identities according to the SCT. The authors further indicated that the process of categorization had the potential to impact subsequent behaviors when the categorization is relevant to an individual's self-related concept. Proponents of Social Categorization Theory claim that individuals place themselves in specified categories that could enhance their group-related fit and thus augment an individual's self-concept (Melton & Cunningham, 2014). Association with in-group membership is a motivational force for some individuals in terms of socially related status (Hogg, 2006; Melton & Cunningham, 2014). Tajfel (1982) suggested that status and status-related differences indicate a differentiation in power and comparative status. The author further indicated that to fully understand group behaviors, the properties of these groups must also be carefully measured.

According to Haslam, Powell, and Turner (2000), in terms of Social Categorization Theory (SCT), salience within a given group-related membership is a determinant of potential group-related behavior. Haslam et al., (2000) stressed that a significant component of salience in this regard is "fit", or genuine match between the categorization and the subjective features of reality. This could potentially offer an explanation for individual work-related motivation. These theories will be used to guide

the following discussion and provide insight and clarification for first-year teacher behaviors in relation to working in mixed seniority settings.

Frye (2018) indicated that the formation of identity for educational professionals is not a simple process as they assimilate to the workplace. Frye (2018) further indicated that educator's transition from formal education to the world of work is commonly misinterpreted, and thought to be an instantaneous process. The formation of individual educator identity takes place in the first few years of the teaching career and is a self-motivated process that typically does not occur of its own volition (Frye, 2018).

Understanding this transition and its related influences from a first-hand novice teacher perspective will offer valuable information and understanding of novice teacher identity and belonging within the organizational setting. The multifaceted process of professional identity formation goes beyond what might be conceived of as formative milestones for new educators, such as evaluations, academic experiences, or conferred educational degrees (Frey, 2018). Frey (2018) further explained that feelings of isolation and the challenges of feeling singled out tend to obscure an already demanding circumstance of novice employees trying to establish their individual identities. In her research, Frey determined novice educator ability to impact the educational environment, the ability to procure professional respect, and professional convictions or beliefs are all relevant factors in the formation of educator identity. Therefore, measures to offer support in these areas are critical to ensure novice educators have adequate and bountiful opportunities to begin the formulation of their professional identities. Hökkä and Eteläpelto (2014) indicated that identity within the workplace environment is potentially formulated

through coaching and related mentoring opportunities. The importance of mentoring and peer support for the novice teacher population will be discussed further in Chapter 2 of this study.

One way for novice teachers to develop professionally, is to take advantage of opportunities to observe other teaching professionals. Kane and Francis (2013) indicated that an important component of teacher identity formation includes opportunities for novice teacher observation of veteran teachers, as well as mentor evaluation and observation of the novice teacher. Kane and Francis (2013) also discussed reflection of educational practice and dialog with other teaching professionals as significant in the formation of novice teacher identity.

Zasytkin et al., (2015) and Nielsen (2016) studied the importance of self-concept for teachers within the educational environment and found it to be critical in the formation of career-satisfaction, professional communication, and teacher retention. The social environment is instrumental to formation of both professional and individual uniqueness and subsequent growth for professional educators (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013). The authors' findings indicated that the quality of a new teacher's social environment and the levels of foundational and institutional support received at the beginning of a new teacher's career are influential in related improvements in the employee's circumstances and situation in the workplace.

Future related research to the areas of novice teacher self-identity and related development of self-efficacy will assist educational leadership and administration in specified determinations to support new teachers at the onset of the teaching career

(Dollansky, 2014). It appears there is limited available literature regarding novice teachers' experiences and perceptions of social influences and decision-making processes in mixed teacher seniority settings. A better understanding of novice teacher's perceptions of social influences with regard to group decision making processes will enhance understanding of their experiences and ultimately the desire to remain in the field of education.

Literature Review

The literature review for this study will focus on the novice teacher and their first years of service in relation to peer and administrative support, the first-year teacher and social influences, the first-year teacher and the process of decision-making, and the first-year teacher and overall retention.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as “acting in a manner that protects the interests of the organization and indicates a commitment to the whole of the organization, not to its parts” (Terzi, 2015, p. 350). Organizational Commitment is vital to the health and productivity of all organizations, as the result of related turnover from lack of organizational commitment could be detrimental (Imran et al., 2017). In the case of education, there is an additional repercussion related to teacher turnover, which is the impact of discontinuity of instruction on the students and their educational growth and related advancement. Imran et al., (2017) stated, “The success of any educational system depends on the excellence of its teachers.” (p. 828). For purposes of this study, first-hand teacher perspective regarding inclusion in the decision-making process, and relevance of

related social influences in the workplace will shed necessary light on novice teacher views that might inhibit teacher development and growth. The development of excellence in any job takes time and support. To develop professionally, teachers need to remain in the field. Knowledge of reasons that cause an early exodus would be critical to that end.

Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a conceptual model of organizational commitment that is comprised of three components that include: (a) affective commitment, (b) continuance commitment, and (c) normative commitment. According to the authors, commitment is psychologically based and indicates the relationships between the employee and the organization. Further, they indicate that organizational commitment impacts decisions for continuance or discontinuance of related organization membership. In the current study, that would be whether novice teachers stay or leave. Meyer and Allen (1991) indicated that a large amount of research has been devoted to the topic of organizational commitment and the authors stated that commitment has been theorized and calculated with a variety of methods. A common thread among the literature is the concept that highly committed employees tend to be less likely to leave their employment circumstances (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Novice teachers who feel disconnected from their workplace might be less inclined to develop higher levels of commitment and thus consider leaving their employment circumstances.

Additionally, Meyer and Allen (1991) indicated that the measurement or calculation of commitment varies in interpretation. It is these differences that equate to the psychological components of organizational commitment, and subsequently create the behavior of continued membership with a given organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

According to Steel and Ovalle (1984), behavioral intentions have maintained an important and vital role in turnover research. The authors indicated that attitudes have been highlighted as a sole antecedent in the prediction of intention related to turnover for employees. Several concepts related to attitude have been linked to the prediction of the decision to stay or leave an employment situation or circumstance (Steel & Ovalle, 1984). Over the course of a novice teacher's first year of employment attitudes that result from factors within the workplace might be influential in a new teacher's motivation to stay in the teaching profession. Imran et al., (2017) purported that motivation is a key factor in organizational commitment, and further indicated that an employee does not demonstrate such until specified motivational aspects are present within the organization. The related motivators typically vary with the individual, and with the workplace context for the individual.

The concept of organizational commitment is dynamic and represents the connectivity between the employee and the energies they exercise on behalf of the organization (Morrow, 1983). Morrow further stated that this concept applies to the organization's values, goals, and subsequent wellbeing. Organizational commitment is described as a culmination of individual traits and situational factors within the workplace. (Morrow, 1983). Therefore, organizational commitment is considered highly personalized and highly contextualized in nature and scope. The field of education is particularly susceptible to levels of organizational commitment as teacher continuity has a direct influence on student achievement (Jones, Youngs, and Frank, 2013).

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) identified three primary aspects of psychological organizational connection as: 1) compliance, 2) identification and 3) internalization. Compliance is predicated on the idea that reward and punishment induce the employee's desire to gain or avoid these depending on the circumstance (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). In other words, the authors indicated that work or effort extended for the workplace is done out of obligation or because the employee is required to do so. Terzi (2015) indicated that fear plays a part in this aspect of psychological organizational connection, and choice in this case, for the employee, is not an option. Identification surrounds, in part, the employee's need to form positive relationships with co-workers within the organizational setting (Terzi, 2015). According to Terzi (2015), the result of this aspect provides employee integration within the organization. In this manner, the employee not only identifies with co-workers in a spirit of collaboration, but with their position within that organization as a professional. For purposes of this study collaboration with co-workers and identification with other educational professionals, in part, equate to inclusion within the work setting, and as such potentially validate novice teachers voice in organizational decisions.

Ng and Allen (2018) indicated that psychological attachment to an organization is directly related to employee health and related factors. In their research, Ng and Allen (2018) determined, of the variables studied in the research, employee "psychological ownership and organization-based self-esteem" (p. 1) had the strongest connection to employee health in their study. Psychological attachment has the potential to influence an employee's level of commitment with a given organization (Bingham, Mitchell, Bishop,

& Allen, 2013). This study will provide insight and perspective to understand the social influence components that contribute to an employee's organizational psychological attachment and subsequent wellbeing.

The Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) described "Affective Attachment" (p. 64) as an affective or emotional point of reference toward the organization or group. The authors further described "Perceived Costs" (p. 64), or continuous commitment as the ramifications of understanding the related costs of the decision to terminate employment. Lastly, Meyer and Allen (1991) described "Obligation" (p. 66), or normative commitment, as that which compels an employee to remain in an employment situation for moral or obligatory reasons. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), the most common attitude to organizational commitment is that which espouses emotional connectivity that links individuals with a belonging, or membership to an organization. The three components of Meyer and Allen's model (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) could have varied impact on levels of organizational commitment (Bergman, 2006). Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick (2006) indicated "organizational citizenship behavior" (p. 672) is associated with employees who display affective organizational commitment. The authors discussed the inherent value of the raised awareness of employee identity as it pertains to organizational commitment and related challenges in the enhancement and maintenance of such commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested that organizational efficiency is dependent on far more than mere stability with the workplace, as a potential negative outcome of organizational commitment could potentially be that workers remain

out of a sense of duty or obligation. As teachers and teacher related effectiveness perform a critical role within the instructional organization (Imran et al., 2017), it is important to determine ways to maintain that workforce.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is defined by Organ and Ryan (1995) as “individual contributions in the workplace that go beyond role requirements and contractually rewarded job achievements” (p. 775). Organ and Ryan (1995) indicated that the literature has included disputes with this definition, each with slight variations.

According to Terzi (2015) the five classified dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) are: a) altruism, b) c) consciousness, d) sportsmanship, e) courtesy and f) civil virtue. The author maintained that his classification of OCB is utilized frequently within the relevant literature. Terzi (2015) indicated that Organizational Commitment (OC) is a forecaster of Organizational Citizenship Behavior within the teaching population, and recommended OC and OCB be utilized by leadership to enhance organizational efficiency. Terzi (2015) determined that Organizational Commitment is a major predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior within that given population, overall. Rana, Malik, and Hussain (2016) indicated that transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles were positive forecasters of organizational citizenship behavior with the teaching profession. Thus, the leadership role is a key facet in the shaping of the workplace environment, potentially influencing the process of decision-making therein. The experience of novice teachers is subsequently shaped as a result of the leadership, and it's bearing the workplace. The research in this study will contribute

to understanding of the novice teacher perspective regarding leadership influence in that regard.

Psychological Contracts and Job Involvement

Job involvement has the potential to change with time, as spent with a given organization (Morrow, 1983). The development of “psychological contracts” (Stoner & Gallagher, 2010, p. 1490) maintains the potential to create negative perspectives and schemas for employees with the workplace. While the formation of both positive and negative employee perspectives remains possible, it is the later that is of concern when considering the related impact on novice teacher retention potential. For purposes of the proposed study, in-depth understanding of the novice teacher perspective will provide information relevant to the potential formation of these “psychological contracts” (Stoner & Gallagher, 2010, p. 1490) and potential influence on novice teacher’s viewpoints related to decisions to remain in the field of teaching. Stoner and Gallagher (2010) suggested that recognition of employee viewpoints and perspectives can provide valuable insight into organizational health and its relation to organizational productivity. Rana et al., (2016) found that transactional leadership (as opposed to transformational leadership) was determined to be a strong predictor of job involvement among teachers. Additionally, Rana et al., (2016) indicated that employee perception of leadership and related leadership style is significant in the development of organizational citizenship behaviors. For purposes of the intended research, novice teachers might develop perceptions of the workplace in relation to a leader’s administrative style and it’s bearing within the work environment. Increased organizational citizenship behaviors indicate a connection to the

organization and its overall purpose. Thus, depending on the perspective of the novice teacher, the administration could be important to their professional decision to remain or to vacate the field of teaching.

Organizational Turnover

Turnover within an organization is “a deliberate effort done to leave one’s institution” (Imran et al., 2017, p. 830). This is an organizational issue that arises in most organizations at one time or another, according to the authors. While it is typically analyzed from the perspective of an outcome, the organizational significance of turnover lies in that which precipitates the outcome (Imran et al., 2017). The authors additionally stated that personal matters and context are also influential on organizational intent and related employee turnover. The cost of turnover is high for organizations, in terms of rehiring and retraining new personnel, which requires valuable time and resources. Imran et al., (2017) espoused that the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985;1991) directly influence actions through behavioral intentions. The theory goes beyond the mere explanation and prediction of behavior; it focuses on antecedents that influence our actions, and related behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The theory, according to the author, suggests that final determinations of both intent and action are made as a result of “antecedents of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Turnover intentions have major predictive value in the determination of the causes and antecedents of authentic turnover (Imran et al., 2017). Therefore, understanding of novice teacher intentions for retention within the field of education will promote clarity of potential reasons for leaving the profession. Perhaps this knowledge

will support educational administration in the prevention of the loss of quality novice teachers. This study provided information to that end, and add to the current body of related research.

The loss of quality teachers is an expensive challenge for the field of education in general (Harfitt, 2015). Kelchtermans (2017) indicated that teacher attrition has a direct and considerable bearing on every member of the educational community. It could be argued from an educational standpoint that the most important component in the “equation” of novice teacher attrition is the student and the direct impact it might have on subsequent instructional practices and continuity of such. As quality instruction is essential to nurture young minds, the quality of teaching matters tremendously. Teachers who work in supportive school environments demonstrate development in their overall efficacy during the first ten years of their employment (Van Overschelde et al., 2017). Van Overschelde et al., (2017) further suggested those teachers who demonstrate efficacy are more likely to stay as opposed to leave their teaching positions. The authors concluded by reiterating the importance of exploration of circumstances that keep, maintain, and retain teachers, to sufficiently meet the needs of the public school student. Arguably, the most valuable product of the educational process is the student (Callahan, 2016; Shaw & Newton, 2014). The proposed research would offer constructive insight to develop understanding of the novice teacher mindset to protect and grow that most valuable and vital resource.

Solutions for Organizational Turnover

Armstrong-Stassen and Stassen (2013) indicated awareness of applicable training, such as professional growth and development opportunities, are directly linked to increases in rates of employee retention, as well as job satisfaction. Value gained from professional development and educationally relevant training programs can be seen through employee actions that support dedication and commitment to the organization in kind (Glaveli & Karassavidou, 2011). Curado, Henriques, and Ribeiro (2015) found that future research is necessary in the area of motivation pertaining to both voluntary and mandatory training and professional development over time to gain insight into employee perspectives. Teacher turnover is directly connected to motivation and commitment intentions (Imran et al., 2017). Tamir, Pearlmutter, and Feiman-Nemser (2017) discussed the importance of such teacher professional programs and found that educational administration and mentoring teachers provide important to teacher retention decision-making. Clarity in the area of professional development motivation and related intentions for novice teachers could guide awareness of the novice teacher mindset and connected attitudes pertinent to retention.

Coetzee, Oosthuizen, and Stoltz, (2016) found that psychosocial contributions to employment circumstances are a positive influence on retention in the workplace. An employee who believes that they are appreciated and of value within their workplace will likely enhance and positively contribute to the workplace environment on a daily basis. For purposes of this study, understanding of these psychosocial components will prove to be an asset to the research.

Heavey et al., (2011) discussed the importance of trust as a means to develop commitment within an organization. The findings of the authors' research indicated that trust is strongly associated with motivation. Thus, trust is considered to be an antecedent of organizational commitment, as well as a vital factor in motivation (Heavey et al., 2011). Heavey et al., (2011) further stated that an organizational initiative that is predicated on trust could assist the organization in moving forward in developing optimal functioning and productivity.

The development of a culture of organizational trust within any given organization is an important goal for a positive and productive climate within the workplace (Pinder, 2008). An employee who has trust within that setting is more likely to create positive intentions toward longevity within the workplace setting. Behavioral intentions have been identified as critical components in turnover research (Steel & Ovalle, 1984). The proposed research is intended to explore the mindset of the novice teacher and potentially gain perspective on social influences that are important to the educational workplace culture.

Organizational Trust

Pinder (2008) indicated that organizational trust creates an atmosphere that will provide opportunity for expansion of organizational commitment, dedication, and allegiance. Leadership or school administrators are primarily responsible for the development of trust within the school environment, as they are instrumental in the creation of school or organizational culture. Schools that encourage and nurture teacher advancement have been shown to possess organizational cultures that are robust (Kardos

& Johnson, 2008; Tamir et al., 2017). Tamir et al., (2017) stated that leadership provides important foundational in teacher development, commitment, and overall retention within the workplace. Additionally, Tamir et al., (2017) studied culture within the field of education, and argued that culture was directly connected to educational leadership, as well as associated commitment of veteran teachers in terms of mentorship and professional practices. Consequently, culture might lend itself to motivation, attitudes and intentions pertaining to novice teacher retention, which provides demonstration of the need for additional research in this area. Leadership, then is a key component in organizational culture, which, depending on the culture, could influence a new teacher's viewpoint of the environment.

Lussier and Achua (2015) describe the “ability to inspire trust” (p. 333) as a desirable and productive leadership behavioral trait. Trust that is inspired through and by organizational administration that foster transformation leadership principles, that which embraces and encourages organizational change, encourages organizational identification for employees. Building of shared trust between employee and employer is vital and a requisite for enhancement of overall organizational commitment (Saeidipour, 2013). Leadership needs to be willing to look at ways to change in order to facilitate in order to promote productivity and grow organizational identification among their staff (Saeidipour, 2013). Allen, Attah, and Gong (2017) stated that trust is a prerequisite to organizational identification. Ng and Allen (2018) indicated that higher levels of organizational trust stimulate endeavors that serve and benefit the organization as a whole.

Commitment in the Field of Education

Allen and Shanock (2013) suggested that the entry to any new organization could include doubt, apprehension and even distress. According to Akar (2018), teacher's perceptions of quality of employment life has a direct positive connection on affective or emotional organizational commitment. Additionally, the author indicated that perceptions of school-related alienation are partially responsible for mediation within these perceptions for quality of work-related employment. Akar (2018) suggested that based on this significance that work conditions for teachers needs continued revision for improvement purposes. Therefore, affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) is an important consideration when reviewing conditions or predictors for teacher retention. A teacher who feels as if they are alienated or isolated within the workplace might not express that they are dissatisfied or feel disconnected to the organization, and then decide to leave the school or the field of education as a result. Akar (2018) depicts alienation as decreasing employee motivation, and causes a lack of focus within the workplace that can cause employees to avoid higher levels of organizational functioning. Overall, this alienation leads organizational disconnection, lack of related motivation, elevated absenteeism and turnover, directly impacting organization citizenship (Akar, 2018). The author suggested that organization citizenship is behavior in which the employee voluntarily behaves in such a manner as to increase organization productivity without apparent reward. Thus, it is applicable to consider affective commitment a robust predictor of organization citizenship (Akar, 2018).

Imran et al., (2017) suggested that success within any given educational organization is reliant upon the quality of teaching within its purview. The authors indicated that organizational commitment diminishes a variety of harmful organizational outcomes, one of which is potential turnover. Decision-making is a foundation for both professional and personalized strength that supports individual power (Harrison, Taysum, McNamara and O'Hara, 2016). When limited, decision-making processes have been directly linked to escalated teacher turnover rates (Albright et al., (2017). Thus, the development of those professional attributes is vital to the retention of such teachers. Involvement in decision-making processes within the organization is influential to that end. That involvement might lend itself to expansion of teacher professional abilities, and more of a sense of belonging with in the school and teacher community.

Imran et al., (2017) found that teacher turnover is regulated with both motivational and commitment intentions. The authors further indicated that in today's society larger opportunities are abundant, and occasionally teachers might leave their jobs with the intent to search for more lucrative positions either within or out of the field of education. This potential loss will create a gaping hole in the educational profession that has direct impact on student learning and student achievement (Tamir et al., 2017). The need to understand this from a novice teacher perspective is critical, and supported the research for this study.

Teacher commitment in the field of Education is vital to the health and wellbeing of the educational community in that it provides continuity of personnel and instruction within the workplace, as well as it lessens the disruption to fundamental educational

programming, and poses several issues vital to student learning and related educational impact (Kelchtermans, 2017). To specify, according to the author, challenges of teacher retention have possible impact on continuity of instruction, which is critical to student success. Kelchtermans (2017) further indicated that issues involving retention of quality teaching staff members also creates additional challenges and related delays to the building of a school culture, which the authors deem as contributory to the school's capacity to build a strong learning environment.

It stands to reason that the field of education would benefit tremendously from an Industrial-Organizational Psychology perspective, perhaps now more than ever, due to the exodus of new teachers mentioned previously in this proposal (Hentges, 2012). The marriage of these two fields would create new possibilities and opportunities for both fields that allow for benefit, growth, development, and expansion of both professional fields.

Novice Teachers and Support

The first year of teacher service creates many stressful challenges that require interventions of support and assistance for novice teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) found that this professional support is critical to first-year teachers, and their ultimate success. Further, stressors and other related challenges during this critical time in a young teacher's career call for support to assist these new employees as they transition to their respective careers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Foundational teaching years can pose significant impressions upon young and aspiring new teachers (Kane & Francis, 2013). Should a teachers' first year include frustration and

unresolved challenges, many new teachers might decide to leave the teaching profession creating a lack of continuity in student achievement. Key elements of support include support from colleagues within the educational field, support from administration or educational leadership in the school setting, and supportive programs that provide a solid foundation for the transition from educational preparation to career.

Novice teachers and peer support. DeAngelis, Wall, and Che (2013) and Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) studied the importance of new teacher support during the first year of service, and possible mentoring and preparation programs, in order for new teachers to meet transitional challenges into the field of education. The authors found that programs of this nature and scope are an essential component to new teacher job satisfaction and subsequent retention potential. Callahan (2016) found that mentoring programs had a positive impact on student-related academic achievement. Those educational professionals who connect in such dialogue in a profound and meaningful manner not only enrich their skills, they also set the path for success and longevity in the teaching field (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). Additional means of support, according to Charner-Laird et al., 2016), include collegial support as a significant contributor to teacher-related efficiency. Collaborations with colleagues and peers have the potential to improve and enhance individual professional practices (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). Relationships with trusted and supportive peers on a professional level have been identified by new teachers as valuable in terms of individual development (Martin, Buelow, & Hoffman, 2016).

Babinski, Jones, and DeWert (2001) indicated that the occasion for a new teacher to engage in open-ended professional conversations reduced the tendency to feel isolated or alone in the workplace. The author's findings indicated that new teachers have a myriad of questions and concerns that they were willing to share in collaborative professional online discussions if provided with the appropriate opportunities. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) argued that teachers who received collaborative planning opportunities with other educational professionals were less likely to migrate or change schools. Professional collaboration is critical to an educator's professional growth, and as such, is necessary for new teacher support and subsequent retention.

Schuck et al., (2018) suggested that a reconsideration of supportive measures and levels of availability of resources for mentors and mentoring programs is essential to the optimal functioning of mentoring programs for new teachers. The authors indicated that school leaders and staff should foster avenues of collaboration in this area to sustain positive change to the school-related culture particularly in social and political areas. Kaufman and Ring (2011) suggested that the social environment is influential in the development of a new teacher's professional attitude as well as their career. Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, and Edwards-Groves (2014) theorized that different types of teacher mentoring or teacher induction programs have varied impacts on the related mentee perspective and subsequent disposition. These programs represent a multitude of similar shared experiences, according to the authors, that allow for perspective reflection as well as societal existence. Kemmis et al. (2014) further indicated that the process of mentoring impacts all participants as well and their collaborative environment, and that

mentoring is a social procedure. The authors argued that for the mentor and the mentee the mentoring experience is transformational in nature and scope. This relational dyad, for the new teacher, can be a motivational catalyst for the desire to continue with professional development activities when the focus of the mentoring is support centered (Kemmis et al., 2014). The authors suggested levels of new teacher professional and career-related commitment are determined by the type and quality of mentoring support they receive. Peer support is therefore paramount to teachers new to the field of education. Mentoring is a socially influential process that has the ability to shape a new teacher's perception of their workplace environment, according to the aforementioned authors. Subsequently, educational leadership could benefit from programs using mentors designed to transition novice teachers to the workplace and potentially increase their desire to remain in the school and ultimately in the field of education.

Brannan and Bleistein (2012) determined that perceived socially based support is directly linked to elevated job-related satisfaction, production, and dedication. In particular, Brannan and Bleistein's mixed methods study results indicated that novice teachers determined three separate aspects of support or support-related networks; veteran or mentor-based support, collegial support and family-based support. The results further indicated that while veteran or mentor support was an important factor for novice teachers, familial support was the only one of the three studied components that directly connected to teacher efficacy. Additionally, the authors found that socially based support is also associated with the over-all wellness of employees in general. Brannan and Bleistein, (2012) additionally argued the significance of perceived support for English to

Speakers of other Language Teachers (ESOL) novice educators should be underscored in addition to the more traditionally emphasized approached of educational pedagogy.

Brannan and Bleistein, (2012) indicated that both the areas of social support and related attitude have an impact on teacher longevity, especially in teacher retention. This is also applicable to the field of education in general and across all educational levels. Gourlay (2011) suggested that support or related communities for higher education instructors should not be pre-supposed.

Conversely, the author determined that the transitional period for new lecturers in the field of higher education was reported to hold negative characteristics such as “a degree of confusion, inauthenticity and isolation” (p. 76) as opposed to collaborative and communal practices. Gourlay (2011) further suggested that the new developmental innovations are necessary to accurately portray new lecturer’s professional search for identity in the transitional period of employment. The author aptly suggested that disparities could exist from former employment circumstances in terms of organizational value that could be prohibitive to the new teacher’s present employment situation. Pollack (2012) suggested that “conversational narratives” (p. 93) hold influential power for the novice teachers, and are significant in the patterns of social behavior for this newly transitioning population. Gourley’s (2011) previously discussed “confusion, inauthenticity and isolation” (p. 76) experienced by novice lecturers during the transitional period to their new job holds the power to shape new teacher perceptions and potentially sway decisions to stay or leave the field of education.

Novice teachers and administrative support. Hanson (2017) indicated that school administrators strive to develop relationships and interpersonal connections within the school environment. The authors further suggested that in striving to foster an environment within schools that encourages the transformation of vision into reality, the individuals within the environmental culture must learn to observe mistakes in the spirit of celebration, or in other words, be willing to take and tolerate risks. Hanson (2017) determined, however, that few teachers were willing to risk that level of professional vulnerability. Most new teachers are reluctant to be forthcoming in that manner, in the protection of their young careers, as well as their professional reputations. The aforementioned study found that teachers did not believe they were provided with sufficient organizational resources and backing to support newer more creative educational ideas (Hanson, 2017). Risk, in general, takes the strength to be wrong, and for a young teacher, in this case, risk takes trust in the organization that if such a risk is taken and mistakes are made, no penalty will result from having the courage to take the risk in the first place. Leadership must be supportive of risk-taking for these employees to be successful. The findings of Hanson's (2017) study point to key organizational factors that could be cause for lack of teacher retention, and a reason for further research on the topic.

Kemmis et al., (2014) indicated that educational leaders should be careful in the selection of quality and quantity of novice teacher induction programs, as these programs offer initial and lasting impressions for the new teacher population. The authors indicated that systematic understanding as well as application of appropriate choice of the

programs have broad organizational implications that promote related degrees of trust within the educational community.

Kelly and Northrop (2015) found school-related interventions on the part of educational administration had a mediating effect on behaviors related directly to novice teacher retention. Administrative support and subsequent involvement are therefore significant to that end. Kelly and Northrop (2015) also indicated that a common reaction to teaching in stressful or challenging teaching environments for novice teachers is to change schools or leave the profession altogether. Albright et al., (2017) indicated that several factors are connected to elevated teacher-related turnover within the workplace, insufficient support from educational leadership being one of the key factors. The authors clarified further that the characteristics of administrators were influential in teacher retention in urban school districts. Curtis and Wise (2012) suggested that educational leaders are a key component in the creation of the school environment and highlighted that these administrators should be provided training that focuses on the development of the tools necessary to support the novice teacher population. Towers (2012) suggested that a significant component of new teacher success within the first year of teaching is a competent and accommodating school leadership staff. This information highlights the importance of the position of school leader as a strong and necessary supportive entity for the new teaching population.

Towers (2012) suggested that all novice teachers experience the benefits of mentoring or mentoring programs. Individualization of mentoring programs by type, such as peer-mentoring programs, which promote professional relationships within the school-

based community, inquiry-based programs, which support and promote inquiry-based instructional practices, is essential to fostering of novice teacher practices. Martin et al., (2016) suggested that it is important that educational administrators choose capable mentors to fulfill this central guiding role. According to Martin et al., (2016), the essential traits of capability include, but are not limited to, possessing prior mentoring experience, the ability to observe, enthusiasm for their given profession, experience with diverse school-based populations, and devotion to the collaborative processes within their given school.

Schuck et al., (2018) argued that support for novice educators should be somewhat intuitive in nature. Schuck et al., also indicated that while support for new teachers is critical, challenging these young professionals is equally as important in terms of their professional development. Duncan (2014) indicated that leadership is critical to teacher development and growth within the field of education. Further, the authors clarified that administration cannot only provide support to these teachers; they have the power to help them flourish in their respective careers. Teachers are called upon to meet the demands of change, in the classroom and through instructional practices. A supportive and encouraging school leader can help to facilitate these necessary changes and meet the needs of their given student population (Duncan, 2014). According to Duncan (2014), school leaders in urban districts are generally unable to offer the support needed for the novice teacher population, frequently leaving them believing as if they have failed in the early stages of their careers. Duncan (2014) further indicated that only those teachers with resolve and fortitude under these circumstances tend to endure. This

would indicate that novice teachers might need higher levels of self-efficacy to thrive during the beginning stages of their career should administrative support be lacking in general. Administrative understanding of the importance of the impact of leadership supportive measures and subsequent prioritization of that resource is essential to new teacher development and progress in the field of education (Duncan, 2014).

Positive relationships with educational leadership are critical components to integration into the educational community and environment for teachers (Elliott et al., 2017). Molitor, Burkett, Cunningham, Dell, and Presta (2014) suggested that school leadership is responsible for creating the conditions that foster success for both new teachers and mentors. As teachers integrate into the educational community and become more innovative in their careers, they were found to have relied on administrative support when creating new instructional programs, and related programming, as indicated by Elliott et al., (2017). A more comprehensive job analysis with descriptive and accurate job responsibilities would prove beneficial to that end (Elliott et al., 2017). The identification of administrative communication and relationships with new teachers as a high priority measure is significant in the improvement of new teacher assimilation and subsequent performance within the teaching environment, according to the aforementioned authors.

The most prominent factors for early large-scale departure by novice teachers from their chosen career are lack of support from leadership, and lack of support on a professional level (Lehman, 2017). Without these tools, novice teachers are set up to “fend for themselves” as they grapple with the typical struggles of teachers new to the

field. Lehman (2017) further indicated that novice teacher enthusiasm for their career is developed through the mentoring process, which forges necessary relationships within the school environment. Both peer support as well as administrative supportive measures are consistent with the retention of the novice teacher population (Lehman, 2017).

Significant to that end, training and guidance for educational administration are imperative to identify applicable programs and curriculum that suit the needs of the novice teacher (Curtis & Wise, 2012). As such, it is important to understand how first-year teachers experience the support they receive or do not receive in the early stages of their career. Given the significance of the administrative leadership role for the novice teachers, understanding novice teacher's first-hand perceptions of social influences within the workplace offers leadership valuable insight into ways to best support the new employees within their purview. Educational leaders have the power to encourage and develop positive social cultures in their schools. As culture has a direct connection to teacher retention rates (Adams & Woods, 2015; Curtis & Wise, 2012), positive school cultures hold a greater potential to keep new teaching staff members.

Novice Teachers and Social Influences

Zasytkin et al., (2015) researched teachers' positive social well-being in conjunction with fulfillment within their careers in education. Zasytkin et al., (2015) determined that the growth and intensification of the teaching position have caused stressful conditions that have been linked directly to teacher retention rates. Quality of life was determined to be an important factor for the teaching population in general, as the stressors associated with professional duties were found to overtake teacher's

personal time, allowing for little “down time” (Zasytkin et al., 2015). Additionally, novice teachers are unknowingly subject to politically charged environments containing issues of power and control (Picower, 2013). In order to navigate these intangible circumstances, there is a further need to develop teacher responsiveness and awareness in this area, prior to the start of their careers (Picower, 2013).

New teachers and the social environment. Aspors and Bondas (2013) found that the social environment and a concerned and caring demeanor within the educational community were of a significant value to the novice teacher population, in terms of transition as a new employee to a new position. Prosocial behaviors, such as compliance, identification, and internalization foster positive connections with emotional and psychological organizational attachment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggested that future research should be inclusive of ways in which to develop and promote these organizational behaviors in the workplace. New employees have significant challenges in assimilation to their daily tasks and duties, in general, therefore it stands to reason that social influences and the challenges associated with such are additional stressors for the new employee that could prove to be harmful to the relationship with the organization. Picower (2013) indicated that new teachers begin their educational careers with varied and individualized goals and ambitions, and in some cases are ignorant of the political surroundings they may be entering in a professional capacity. The author found that programs designed to assist the novice teacher population in this area could guide them in developing new and important awareness regarding this as well as other educational practices, and potentially help them to avoid these possible

career-breaking pitfalls. Transition is an important component of a successful teaching career for new teachers, and unsuccessful assimilation to the educational environment is a potential determinant in the longevity of new teachers, according to Kane & Francis (2013).

New teachers and professional identity. Positive teacher self-perceptions as well as perceptions of their evaluators were found to be associated with productive communication and teacher longevity (Nielsen, 2016). Individual professional identities are formed through the processes and communications involved in the workplace (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). In the process of new employee transition, organizations have collaborative resources as well as restrictions, and new employees use these to navigate their professional development. During this important and critical time, organizational and social norms are constructed, and these norms could be assimilated, rejected, or limited (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). Hökkä and Eteläpelto (2014) suggest that this process of developing a professional identity is dynamic and multifaceted, and it links socially related implications with worker or employee expectations. This is a dynamic process, and the process itself is somewhat intangible in nature and scope. It is the process that offers definition to an individual's professional identity and is the way in which workers characterize their workplace characteristics (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). According to Hökkä and Eteläpelto (2014) professional identity includes a person's overall general allegiance, focus, and values associated with their daily professional work commitments, or matters of significance within the workplace.

Ticknor (2014) indicated that professional identity within the field of education had been a longstanding topic within research and the educational community. Ticknor summarized that a general perception exists that teaching is easy and that becoming a teacher does not require much work. However, the intricacies of becoming a teacher are obscure to the public. This creates a dynamic that new teachers must navigate while trying to find their way within their newfound position, professionally and socially. Ticknor further indicated that the development of a sense of identity for teachers begins in the preservice years and should focus on progress in the areas of instructional skill as well as emotional growth. Hökkä and Eteläpelto (2014) suggested that workplace identity formation in a professional capacity could be developed through coaching opportunities within the work environment. This strategy, according to the authors, provides empowerment for new teachers to direct their own path to professional self-discovery and awareness. The responsibility of leadership to create the pathway for collaborative pairings in this manner is essential to the creation of teacher professional identity (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). Therefore, leadership is responsible for providing appropriate and useful new teacher programming that meets the needs of their new staff members. The authors noted that one particular barrier to the formation of identity was what the authors termed as “hegemonic discourse” (p. 47), or, simply put, the patterns of collaborative discussion for communal purposes. This type of communication is somewhat competitive in nature and scope and places the teachers in a position where they must defend and protect, dependent upon the subject matter. Typically, the subject matter is a teacher’s subject or area of specialty (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). According to the authors,

venues of opportunity are required to allow for adequate development of teacher perspective or viewpoint in this matter. It is important that these developments can and should occur at the within three levels; at the individual or employee level, within the work environment level, and systematically at the organizational or school level (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). Subsequently, venues for teachers to develop professional discussion and communication is vital to the growth of their professional identity, and ultimately organizational productivity.

New teachers, transitional programs, and career retention. Hanawalt (2015) purported that the evaluative nature of the academic environment, as expressed by novice teachers of Art in higher education, mandates that new teacher support and induction programs should include ways to promote channels of communication and shared goals within the school community. Positive change for educators within their career and professional development requires the utilization of professional abilities and resources to provide for an optimal change environment (Vähäsantanen, 2015). Kraft, Marinell, and Shen-Wei (2016) suggested that school environments that provided support and collaboration held higher rates of retention for their teachers. Additionally, teachers' positive perceptions of the profession and overall career satisfaction were impacted by the expanding nature of the teaching position and teaching responsibilities in general (Kraft et al., 2016). Kraft et al., (2016) additionally argued that a focus on teacher improvement in instructional strategies and teacher instructional efficacy alone would not likely solve retention related issues. Qualitative research, such as proposed in this study, will give a more in-depth perspective and information to potentially look at the whole

picture, in a “Gestalt-like” manner, from pieces of that information with the intent to discover and identify other challenges related to new teacher retention. Kraft et al., (2016) suggested the importance of future qualitative research focused on the exploration of methods that are aimed at successfully fortifying organizational cultures. Toward that end, this study provided insight into the creation of positive change initiatives within the teaching environment.

Jones et al., (2013) and Pogodzinski (2015) indicated that the mentoring experience was very influential in the ultimate decision for novice teachers to remain in the teaching career, and directly had an impact on retention experiences for these professionals. This practice can also lend itself to enhanced instructional practices as a result of efficient and productive mentoring pairings (Pogodzinski, 2015). Pogodzinski (2015) suggested that new teachers navigate their career expectations and experiences based on their own learned professional experiences as well as indications and prompts from the social environment. Schools maintain the ability to mold, for better or for worse, the new teacher’s social experience. Jones et al., (2013) determined that attention on teacher commitment is critical in unstable educational economic climates. In a fluctuating economy, teachers who are dissatisfied with their careers might remain in their positions out of financial necessity, and demonstrate less dedication and effort (Jones et al., 2013). This would directly impact the learning environment for students. The authors further suggested attention to teacher commitment would address not only the goal, but also enhance student-related achievement. Tamir et al., (2017) identified that a significant portion of new teachers was not given the exposure to transitional programs, and less

than half of the population surveyed believed that their induction was met with serious concern and care. The quality of mentoring programs, either successful or unsuccessful, could directly impact a teacher's initial perception of their first year of teaching in the field. This perception might leave them disheartened or discouraged, and without communicational venues to express their disappointment or dissatisfaction, these employees could begin to search for other viable teaching positions.

Positive teacher self-perceptions have been found to be associated with teacher longevity (Nielsen, 2016). As the process of professional identity formation within the workplace is complex, organizations are essential in offering resources and social support to assisting their employees with such development (Hökkä and Eteläpelto, 2014). As new teachers experience many unique challenges within the first year of teaching (Picower, 2013) exploration of a first-year teacher's perspective regarding these experiences would be beneficial in expanding understanding and identification of important resources that will increase and support overall teacher retention.

Novice Teachers and Decision-Making Processes

The position of decision-making has changed from active to passive for today's teachers (Picower, 2013). Picower (2013) determined that the opportunity for independence in the decision-making process for teachers has been greatly diminished. Interventions intended to help facilitate teamwork are influenced by a variety of socially related factors such as a lack of collaboration, lack of certainty, or a lack of resolve in the decision-making process. This has the potential to lead to unproductive team related behaviors. (Sterling et al., 2016). Troyer and Youngreen (2009) determined that freedom

of expression along with the ability to challenge and question the decision-making process is required in order to maintain positive outcomes obtained through diversely based perspectives in the workplace. van Veelen et al., (2017) indicated that awareness of negative factors impacting socially charged circumstances, and the promotion of productive group conversations in the workplace, is helpful in the process of organizational decision-making. The authors determined this to be of significant value for the population of secondary school administrators.

Additionally, Molitor et al. (2014) purported that the guiding principles that foster and welcome all educator perspectives in the decision-making process are paramount to growing both mentor and novice teacher professional capacities within the field of education. Socially empowering new teachers will strengthen and fortify their personal and professional abilities. This has dramatic potential to increase job-related satisfaction and lessen the possibility for a new teacher to search for other professional opportunities.

Teachers enter the world of teaching with the expectation that they will add to the process of school decision-making related to educational needs, not only follow those decisions made by others within the organization or school (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). The authors further argued that schools or educational organizations, similar to other organizations, must improve their organizationally related procedures and traditions in order to enhance their levels of production and educational output. Consequently, a lack of educator collaboration has been connected to reduced overall teacher instructional quality (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014). Harrison et al., (2016) suggested that the process of decision-making is a foundation for both professional and personalized strength that

supports individual power. Harrison et al., (2016) further suggested that experienced teachers and students typically desire more expression in the decision-making process. Participation is deemed as significant for those who are impacted by the progression of decision-making in general (Harrison. et al., 2016). Overall, the authors indicated that teachers expressed the need to have all faculty and staff members more involved and concerned with relevant decision-making in the school-based setting.

Albright et al., (2017) indicated that limited staff input into relevant school-based decision-making was connected to high levels of teacher turnover. The rates of related stability in the aforementioned area were reportedly higher in those schools where teachers felt they had some influence over decision-making within the school setting. New teachers, according to Muijs et al., (2013) did not perceive themselves as significantly involved in decision-making processing as other teaching or administrative professionals, or as those with more seniority. This might be due, in part, to inexperience in the teaching field, which could naturally decrease levels of related new teacher participation. The lack of experience might also limit a new teacher's participation in educational or environmental change related initiatives in the school setting (Muijs et al., 2013). New teachers need to be supported during their first year in the profession, as they "find their place" in the organization. Understanding of the nuances that undermine a new teacher's willingness to actively participate in the decision-making processes in their respective schools. To that end, building a school culture that is tolerant of new "voices" is significant in helping these teachers to identify to both the organization and their profession.

Zimmerman (2017) suggested that school culture has an impact on instructional objectives as well as educational decision-making abilities. Zimmerman (2017) further indicated that a teacher's educational experiences might also be influential in this process. Additional research involving teacher longevity and school cultural implications is warranted in this area to further subsequent understandings (Zimmerman, 2017). Zimmerman (2017) further indicated that novice teachers should be aware that the first year of teaching involves flexibility and occasional compromise to their methods of thinking. This should be a facet of the educational career that is anticipated as well as embraced by leadership in support of first-year teaching staff.

Orchard, Heilbronn and Winstanley (2016) recommended that teachers should promote the development of traditional pedagogical skills as well as personal attributes that will allow them to engage in ethical decision-making as the teaching position warrants. To that end, Orchard et al., (2016) further recommended that critical reflection time is necessary for teachers to contemplate daily challenges, and dilemmas that occur within the school context. Hallman and Deufel (2017) argued that the telling of stories could assist new teachers in the resolution of issues or problems they may face in their early teaching career. Multiple perspectives can assist in the facilitation of teacher-based of instructional problems. Further the authors cautioned that novice teachers should be careful of traditional notions of expertise as they apply to the field of education. Those indicators might have an influence on levels of professional identity, should the novice teacher buy into those notions.

Reicher et al., (2012) discussed groups and group-related activity as frequent foundations of social issues. The authors additionally indicated that these groups, as the underpinning of the related problems, are the key to social facilitation and have the capacity to solve these issues. “Teacher Voice” (Molitor et al., 2014, p. 55) has been identified as a leading attitude that is directly connected with new teacher readiness programs and induction programs. New teacher programs have the potential to be a valuable learning tool for the novice teacher population given the critical components of group effort, and individual choice are included in the framework of the programming and curriculum. Including new teacher’s voices in the transitional culture for first-year teachers with regard to both social and decision-making organizational functioning is thus essential for new teacher assimilation and wellbeing, as well as the ultimate retention of these teachers to benefit the student achievement and retention of new and promising young teacher talent. As suggested by Curtis and Wise (2012), “recruitment, support and retention of qualified teachers will ultimately benefit our nation’s children” (p. 81). Ultimately, the field of education is driven toward student achievement. Maintaining and preserving enthusiastic and talented new teachers is critical to organizational health and wellbeing in the field of education.

Summary and Conclusions

A review of the literature has identified that new teacher peer and administrative support is critical to new teacher transition and functioning within the workplace environment. Additionally, social impact and inclusion of new teacher voices in decision-making processes were found to be important to new teacher education and learning

within their work environment. To that end, a more complete understanding of novice teacher perceptions of social influence and the group decision making processes improves understanding of the effect such processes have on new teacher retention. As it appeared there was limited available applicable literature regarding novice teachers' experiences and perceptions of social influences and decision-making in varied mixed teacher seniority settings, this study addressed such as a relevant and significant gap within that literature. To that end, a qualitative methodology was utilized for this study. Phenomenology maintains the focus of creating new understandings from dynamic human experience (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). The nature of socially based influences and decision-making and their relation to new teacher's decisions to remain in their careers within the educational field, are in and of themselves phenomenological in nature and scope. This study sought to determine the significance of this phenomenon as experienced first-hand by novice teachers, through the use of qualitative research and interviews, which is aligned with qualitative research design (see Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research provided an individual and first-hand perspective of the phenomenon that is the central focus of this research study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that the method of interviewing is fitting for situations that deal with social circumstances. In this case, the interviewing process allowed for broadening of researcher viewpoints allowing for deepening of emotions and knowledge necessary to further understanding of the research phenomenon (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) further indicated that the in-depth qualitative interview assists in the portrayal of "social processes" (p. 3). Additionally, in-depth qualitative interview processes are

appropriate when working with intangible and complex issues, which for purposes of this study met the needs of exploration of the lived experiences of social influences and decision-making for the novice teacher population within an educational setting.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the lived experiences of social influences and decision-making for novice teachers in K to 12 schools in the State of New Jersey. In this chapter, I provide information regarding the methodological strategies for this study. The first segment of this chapter offers information regarding the research design for the study and subsequent appropriate justification. In the second segment of this chapter, I provide the procedural methods included in this research study. In the third segment of this chapter, I recognize and illuminate ethical considerations within the research study and discuss issues regarding trustworthiness within the research study as well. Lastly, I conclude the chapter with a summary of key aspects of phenomenology for the current study.

Research Design and Rationale

The phenomenological research approach focuses on the creation of new knowledge from the complexities of the human experience (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2013), the qualitative researcher examines natural phenomena to search and identify reasons that they occur and to discover possible related significance. Creswell (2014) indicated that phenomenology includes the perspective of the research participants and their depiction of the aspects of a given phenomenon. Creswell further suggested that for the purposes of a qualitative study, both the research setting and the research participants are selected with purpose and intent. The phenomenological nature of social influence and decision-making and their respective

relationship to novice teachers' determination to remain in their careers, the central concept of this study, was appropriate for the use of qualitative methodology. My intent was to determine the relevance of social influences and decision-making as experienced by novice teachers from the individual participant point of view.

The following research questions are included in this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of decision-making in the workplace?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): At what point do novice teachers become aware of social influence in relation to decision-making in the workplace?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What role does social influence and group or team-based decision-making play in the novice teacher's perspective to remain in the teaching profession?

Role of the Researcher

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that the design of qualitative research is “fluid, flexible, interactive, and reflexive” (p. 66). Ravitch and Carl further stated that the role of the researcher in this regard is to provide important connectivity between each of the segments. For purposes of this study, as the researcher, I was be responsible for the recruitment of participants, determination of appropriate instruments, recording of participant interviews, the collection of all applicable data, coding and analysis of all applicable and relevant data, and interpretation of all findings within the data. In

qualitative studies, the researcher is a focus and research tool for purposes of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As such, it was my responsibility to uphold and maintain all ethical standards as required by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (see Walden University, 2017a).

The researcher in qualitative interviewing should become a part of the interview process as an objective observer, using excellent listening skills in order to accurately capture and then interpret the data. In this case, my purpose was to ask questions that facilitate and further the understanding of the lived experiences of novice teachers regarding social influences and decision-making within the first or second year of their teaching career.

Precautions were taken to ensure that there will be no personal or professional connections between researcher and participant in this study. All participants were considered from the available novice teacher pool within the given school district, and any unforeseen relationships that could be considered bias in any manner between researcher and a potential participant was be strictly observed and avoided. Were a connection identified, the participant would have been eliminated from the study.

As an educator in the field of education for more than 20 years, I was cognizant of any biases that might stem from my experience within the field. At one time, I was new to the profession, and I needed to keep awareness of my biases through my own experiences at the forefront of my research and interviewing. To that end, first, I did not use my own workplace to conduct this research (see Walden University, 2018c). Second, to keep my biases in check, a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (see Ravitch &

Carl, 2016, p. 70) was established to assist in the identification of the researcher's position within the study. I also used journals and notes for daily reflection on research and related work (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Further, self-awareness was extremely important as I typically have many facial expressions and tend to gesture or motion with my hands frequently. Practice in this area, as well as focus on these challenges, increased my chances of being successful at controlling any facial expressions or gestures that might be suggestive to the participant being interviewed. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), this type of behavior could have led or biased the participant during the interview process. I reviewed my journal and researcher notes regularly to maintain balance and self-regulate within this area, giving adequate time for reflection and self-feedback both before and after the interview process (see Burkholder et al., 2016).

Methodology

In the methodology section, I provide detailed information on the methods and procedures used in this study, including participant recruitment and selection, instrumentation, collecting data and data analysis strategies, and subsequent interpretation of the research study findings. I also discuss potential issues trustworthiness, focusing on reliability and credibility that might be pertinent to this study, in addition to discussing germane and related ethical considerations for the study.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology was a philosophically based movement originated by Husserl that centers on the description of lived experiences according to a first-hand viewpoint (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Constructivism and humanism are both

connected to the concept of phenomenology (Burkholder et al., 2016). Husserl embraced the concept of epoché, which signifies deferral of nonevidence judgments (Burkholder et al., 2016; Welton, 1999). The concept of epoché is predicated on reflection and reflective practices and that meaning cannot present without that reflection (Burkholder et al., 2016). Burkholder et al. (2016) further indicated that awareness of experiences, in their own right, is a primary source of understanding and that procuring knowledge from the source is important to that end. In the use of epoché in research, the researcher must gain awareness of their personal biases, which might impact the research process (Burkholder et al., 2016). Descriptive or transcendental phenomenology was used in this study to understand, in depth, a novice teacher's lived experience of social influences, decision-making, and career retention.

Descriptive or transcendental phenomenology takes individual experiences and goes beyond them through analysis according to patterns and themes to allow for understanding and clarification (Burkholder et al., 2016). Burkholder et al., stated that the purpose of phenomenology is to find commonalities within the data that are related to the phenomenon. It is meant to help us understand and relate to the human components within a given lived experience. Interpretive phenomenology focuses on the works of Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This type of phenomenology references the different ways in which people perceive and comprehend lived experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Moustakas is considered one of the initial pioneers of phenomenological research and founded heuristic research (Moustakas, 1994;

Rudestam & Newton, 2015), which embraces discovery in terms of gathering of data in the research process.

Interviewing

The interviews for this research were in-depth, face-to-face, and semistructured. This technique aligns with designs such as descriptive or transcendental phenomenology for purposes of qualitative research (see Creswell, 2014). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), the interview process allows for information to be captured by the researcher using open-ended questions that provide the opportunity for participant perspective.

Reflexive Journaling

Reflexive journals, notes, and memos were used during the process to record thoughts and reflections during the interview procedure. Rubin and Rubin (2012) proposed the use of researcher notes for clarity during interview transcription. Rubin and Rubin further suggested that this could assist in the identification of researcher bias that might interfere with the research process. Burkholder et al. (2016) indicated that this type of narration provides insight into the researcher's assumptions regarding the study and the research participants. Bracketing, (Burkholder et al., 2016), a method used in qualitative research to alleviate possible consequences of researcher preconceived notions, was implemented through the process of reflexive journaling for this study.

In the current study, I used descriptive phenomenology in concert with individual interviews and researcher reflexive journaling to create a robust phenomenological research design. This methodology revealed patterns and thematic data derived from the exploration of novice teacher perspectives on social influences and decision-making in

relation to retention. Descriptive phenomenology also allowed for these patterns and themes to unfold further understanding of the lived experiences of the novice teacher. This allowed for enhanced understanding and clarification of intention regarding retention.

Recruitment and Participation

Recruitment

The population for this research was the novice teacher population in the State of New Jersey within the United States of America. For purposes of participant selection for the current study, six New Jersey state-certified full-time novice teachers, identified through the Provisional Teacher Program (PTP; New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a), were recruited from K to 12 public schools within the counties of Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic in Northern and Central New Jersey. This geographic location was expanded to include additional counties in Northern New Jersey. Additionally, the represented population was expanded from secondary schools to include all public schools K to 12. Snowball sampling was implemented as a means of recruitment for this study. Snowball sampling is defined as identification of potential or possible research participants from those who are currently participating in a given study (Babbie, 2016). This provided differentiated perspectives from various socioeconomic backgrounds for purposes of this study. Depth of individual perception is paramount to phenomenological studies (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Sample

Burkholder et al., (2016) stated that the appropriate sample size for phenomenological research could range from five to fifteen individual participants (p. 206). Burkholder et al., further indicated that the use of larger numbers does not necessarily create more knowledge of a given phenomenon; therefore, the number of research participants might be smaller than other qualitative research methodologies.

The recent research of Zimmerman (2017) implemented a sample of three novice teachers in the phenomenological study of their instructional principles upon entering the educational workforce. The study of Martin et al., (2016) focused on middle-level teachers and their qualitative research. A five-teacher sample was used to explore, in depth, the perceptions of new teachers in terms of overall improvement of institutional support, and insight into teacher retention patterns of attrition in the attempt to fortify levels of student achievement. Ticknor (2014) researched the impact of complexities of teacher identity formation through qualitative measures. Of the sample of four, Ticknor centered on the data from one participant in the article *Negotiating Professional Identities in Teacher Education: A Closer Look at the Language of One Preservice Teacher*. Lastly, Bennett et al., (2013) utilized four participants in their phenomenological study of two veteran and two novice teachers in terms of overall intentions of retention. The sample size of six for purposes of this study was in alignment with the aforementioned studies of a similar nature and scope. That provided room for the possibility of voluntary participant termination, if that were to occur during the process of the research procedures. Further, the total of six participants provided access to sufficient new

information to potentially reach a saturation point in the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Further Rubin and Rubin stated that for qualitative research purposes when no new or pertinent information is offered during the research process, saturation has then been achieved.

A purposeful sample was utilized to achieve the target sample for the novice teacher population. Burkholder et al., (2016) suggest that purposeful selection sampling is typical for qualitative parts of research. The sample maintained a focus on the key components of the study to satisfy study eligibility. This sample consisted of certified fulltime employed novice teachers within public schools in the counties of Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic Counties in Northern and Central New Jersey. The inclusion of participants from different socioeconomic background provided a depth and breadth of experiences shared in this study (Burkholder et al., 2016).

The criteria for participants included teachers in their first or second year of service as a professional educator in a K to 12 public school setting. This was identified through the State of New Jersey mentoring requirement that is mandated for all provisional teachers in the first year of professional teaching in a public school setting (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019b), and through participation in the State of New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program (PTP) (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a). If a teacher was in the process of this official New Jersey State mentoring, or in the Provisional Teacher Program, then they were considered for study participation. Subsequently, I, as the researcher, contacted each potential candidate to ensure that they meet the research criteria, understood the research procedures and protocol, and to obtain

initial consent or agreement. This was included in the study to obtain initial consent and to make certain that each participant is voluntarily consenting to participation. It ensured that no participant felt obliged to participate or fears retribution should they decline.

Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

The participants were recruited on a volunteer basis, each was provided with an overview of the research purpose, an informed consent agreement. The process included a thorough review of participant rights and responsibilities for the current study. Time for participant questions was included at the beginning and end of the interview process.

Data Collection

Instrumentation

An initial script (Appendix A) was read to all participants in the study prior to the commencement of the face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to provide clarification of the research purpose. In-depth face-to-face, semi-structured interviews containing seven open-ended questions (Appendix B) were conducted for this research study, in alignment with qualitative research designs (Creswell, 2014). Each interview was approximately one hour in length. Additional probing questions were asked where appropriate (Burkholder et al., 2016). Examples of possible probing questions are shown in Appendix B.

The interview allowed for ample data to be gathered using open-ended questions, which provided the opportunity for “rich and detailed information” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 29). Rubin and Rubin further indicated that this format provides allowances for the participant to answer in their own way giving the possibility for prospective

information or relevant data. In addition, audio recordings were used to capture participant interviews. Alternate means of recording, such as researcher transcription were planned to be used should a participant not want to be recorded during the interview process. Researcher notes, journals, and memos were used during the process to record researcher thoughts and reflections during the interview procedure. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested the use of researcher notes to provide further explanation of unclear areas during the transcription phase.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that the interviews are “nonneutral” (p. 149). Ravitch and Carl further stated that as such interviews contain large and small-scale influential factors, such as environment, political atmosphere, prior experiences, participant mood, etc.), that impact the interview, the interview process, and all subsequent interview interactions. Fostering awareness, as the researcher, that these factors have the power to affect the research process can assist in creating essential concepts and context within the data analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) further indicated that this awareness fosters the possibility of the discovery of influential factors that impact participant’s viewpoints and experiences relevant to the research.

Establishment of content validity was, in part, determined through the gathering of relevant feedback from collaborative processes involving participants. (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A transcript was sent to all participants for review and verification of accuracy and true meaning of interview statements captured by the researcher in the transcription process. Triangulation was established within the design of the study by utilizing

different levels of school socioeconomic status, thus combining both purposeful and intensity sampling.

Procedures for Data Collection

Interviews with study participants were used to collect the data for the current research. As the researcher, I collected the data from the participants during their face to face interviews. Interviews were conducted using an audio recording device, if applicable. Alternates were planned to participate in the study from the approved alternate pool if additional participants were needed. In addition, each participant was provided a copy of his or her transcribed interview for review, and authenticity verification. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that researchers consider resourceful ways to facilitate participation validation, including review of interview transcripts.

Data Analysis Plan

I analyzed data for this research study by coding the interview data. (see Saldaña, 2016). This strategy aligns with the phenomenological approach for qualitative research according to Creswell (2014). In addition, I utilized fieldnotes as a reflective means to review the interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used NVivo (NVivo, n.d.) to analyze and code the qualitative interview data. According to NVivo (n.d.), the software detects valuable associations within the data that helps to organize the qualitative data. Categories, themes, and concepts within the data were identified and reviewed for patterns or relevant information that answer the research questions. In addition, I used “Tesch’s Eight Steps in the Coding Process” (Cresswell, 2014, p. 198). These steps include; 1) Reviewing the whole, and noting ideas, 2) Reviewing one document for

underlying meaning, and noting related ideas, 3) Making a list of all topics, grouping topics of a similar nature, 4) Bring that list back to the data, coded, to see if new codes or categories might be found, 5) Create descriptive wording for topics and transform them into appropriate categories, and find methods of category-list reduction through topic grouping, locating relationships within the data, 6) Decide on abbreviations for categories and then alphabetize codes, 7) Gather all category materials and place them together for the first analysis, and finally, 8) Recode the current data as needed (Cresswell, 2014).

In the initial stage of the data analysis process, a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 70) was established to assist in the identification of the researcher's position within the study. The data analysis process starts by reducing the data using codes that represent the participants' experiences as expressed during the interview. The participant's experiences are used to develop categories using these codes. Themes are developed from the categories that represent the participants' experiences. (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). This type of qualitative data is critical to answering the research questions. Research Question 1 (From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace?) requires the first-hand viewpoint of the participant in relation to their specified teaching situation or circumstance. The data gathered through the interview questions (Appendix B) provided insight and provide perspective to answer the research questions (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). As previously stated, transcripts were sent to all participants for verification and validation.

Issues Regarding Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research, it is important to appropriately evaluate rigor and quality within the study using the components of “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188). Creswell (2014) suggested that qualitative researchers implement two strategies applicable to this study to demonstrate reliability; 1) Transcript review for accuracy and 2) Checking for consistency in coding throughout the research process. Ravitch and Carl (2016) further stated that these concepts are directly associated with implied facets of validity (p. 188). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), a key strong suit of the qualitative interview is the fact that it yields trustworthy results (p. 63). Creswell (2014) suggested that the innate value of qualitative research is the contextual, thematic description developed in the research process. Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, and Ponterotto (2017) indicated that trustworthiness shows conviction that the study summarizes relevance within the experience of study, and demonstrates the importance of the topic for research purposes in general.

Credibility

Credibility, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016) refers to the accounting of all the dimensions within a given research study by the researcher. Shenton (2004) indicated that the establishment of credibility is vital in the formation of trustworthiness within research studies. The author stated that credibility in research “deals with the question, ‘How congruent are the findings with reality?’” (p. 64). Credibility, for the purposes of this research, was established, in part, through reflexivity in researcher notes, journaling.

Reflexivity was demonstrated through the means of a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo, or a researcher created document that reflects the researcher's thoughts and ideas before, during and after the research process (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that these strategies support quality in qualitative research. Given my educational and professional connection to the research topic, and possible researcher biases, these tools were appropriate to reduce potential bias.

Transferability

Transferability, according to Shenton (2004) is focused on the specific degrees of relationships and appropriateness from one individual study to other studies of a similar nature. Thomas & Magilvy (2011) stated that transferability is the "ability to transfer research findings or methods from one group to another" (p. 153). This is also known as "generalizability" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188). Thick description is one method recommended to increase transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Ravitch and Carl (2016) depict thick description as encapsulates the significance and relevance of the participant experience. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) also indicated that thick description in qualitative research establishes transferability. For purposes of this research, thick description was utilized to depict the lived experiences of the participants in the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's capability to maintain relative objectivity within the context of the given research. Qualitative researchers make no assertion of

objectivity, and as such appropriate awareness and insight is required to circumvent and ultimately avoid potential biases in the research and the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Reflexivity was established through the creation of the Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 70) previously mentioned in this chapter. As the researcher is the main and primary research instrument in qualitative studies, the responsibility to strive for consistent and ongoing processes to achieve objectivity throughout the research is that of the researcher (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To that end, finding ways to illuminate and eliminate my own biases through reflexivity procedures, such as the researcher journals to be implemented in this study, proved extremely beneficial.

Dependability

Dependability is equal to reliability in quantitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Dependability is demonstrated when other researchers are able to replicate a given study or able to follow the designed course of research and procedures for that specific study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Audit trails are used in qualitative research (Burkholder et al., 2016; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011) and for purposes of this study were implemented and demonstrated through researcher memos and notes.

Ethical Considerations and Procedures

Walden University (2018d) provides specific guidelines for research conducted within educational settings. Although this research study represented the novice teacher population, and not the student population, it was helpful as a researcher to create

awareness and understanding of conducting research in an educational setting. Although I have many years as an educator, qualitative research demands that I am constantly revisiting my own biases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), and as such, the review of the other pertinent related documents was key to conducting quality and ethically sound research.

Access to Participants

Access to participants in this study was determined collaboratively between the participant and myself, as the researcher. Both parties were aware of any criteria or restrictions, such as scheduling of interviews in consideration of teacher contracted time and related duties. Subsequently, all interviews were scheduled on non-contracted teacher time.

Treatment of Human Participants

The selection of educational settings involved in this study will be an important consideration in this study. Creswell (2014) recommended the researcher select possible research sites that maintain no association to the researcher. Therefore, public-school settings within Monmouth, Ocean, and Morris counties, in the State of New Jersey that are unknown to the researcher were considered to foster minimal risk to all involved. Minimal risk involves avoidance of any participant discomfort that is more than might be experienced in everyday life experience (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Ethical Concerns

The protection and privacy, and anonymity of the research participants was of principle concern for purposes of this study. As such the document of Informed Consent, the acknowledgment of the recipients, and mine in return constitutes intent of agreement

and full cooperation of all stakeholders. Each participant voluntarily chose to take part in the research. If it was determined that a personal relationship existed between myself, as the researcher, and any potential candidate, that participant was not selected for purposes of this study.

Any participant for any reason, at any point in time, who would have refused to take part in the study would have been immediately released from the research. The participants were informed of this at the commencement of the research process, in the Informed Consent process. Any applicable data obtained from a withdrawn participant would have been removed from the data analysis. Additionally, all data procured from this study is confidential, and the participants are anonymous. As such, each participant, and school district (as applicable) was given a letter or “letter name” to signify their identity. No actual or real names or school districts were identified in this study. The novice teachers in this study are establishing themselves within their new respective careers. I recognized and respected the significance of this important consideration throughout the research process. In my consideration, this qualified the intended population as vulnerable, for purposes of this study. Therefore, it was imperative that all participants, as well as their related school districts (as applicable), were anonymous, and their names are not known to anyone, except myself, as the researcher.

Potential power-related disparities, such as a novice teacher fear of retaliation from a supervisor or administration due to participation in the study, were taken into consideration and addressed through concealment of any potential identifying data. A new teacher’s potential apprehension to speak about decision-making or social influences

within their newfound work setting might be cause for fear of ramifications. As a result, the rights and privacy of teacher and administration populations were protected within the confines of the research, using codenames. Reassurance was be given to the participants that the codenames will be honored within the study. The recognition of such is a critical component of excellence in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Summary

As previously stated, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of social influence and decision-making for novice teachers in K to 12 public schools in the State of New Jersey. The choice of qualitative research and applicable phenomenology design was suitable to further novice teacher perspectives and determined related insights into the aforementioned phenomenon in such a manner as to provide thick description to add relevant understanding and answers to the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

A total of six novice teachers were interviewed in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews for purposes of this study. The data were analyzed using NVivo software (NVivo, n.d.). The data analysis determined codes, categories, and appropriate themes that were discovered through the research interviews. In the evaluation of rigor and quality of the study, “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188) was implemented for purposes of assessment in that regard.

In Chapter 4, I will offer the research results from the data analysis, inclusive of participant statements, and direct quotations that will serve as evidentiary means for the codes, categories and thematic patterns discovered through the research analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I present the results of the qualitative data analysis and research for this study through participant statements to illustrate the codes, categories, and thematic patterns revealed in the data collection process. The focus of this qualitative phenomenological research was to ascertain the lived experiences of novice teachers with regard to social influences and decision-making in the workplace. Within this chapter, I review and explain the lived experiences of the six participants and subsequent analyses. The phenomenological design of this study allowed me to examine the viewpoint of the novice teacher (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

In Chapter 4, I discuss the demographic information for the depicted study. I discuss the data collection process and procedures for data analysis used for this study. Issues of trustworthiness and credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are also addressed in the chapter. The results of this research are discussed in relation to each research question posed for this study, and, finally, I conclude Chapter 4 with a summary of the results.

Setting

No personal or organizational conditions influenced participants or their experience at any time during the study. Each participant was interviewed at a public library, which represents a neutral location that did not involve their place of work. Additionally, participant interviews took place during noncontracted time for all teachers.

Demographics

The population for this research is the K to 12 public school, novice teacher population in the State of New Jersey within the United States of America. The terms *novice* and *new teacher* were originally defined in Chapter 1 of this study as depicting a teacher “in their first or second year of service as a professional educator in a K to 12 public school setting” (Stewart, 2019, p. 11). Due to the timing of the school year and approval of new sampling procedures within the study, that definition was expanded for purposes of this research. It was necessary to align the previous definitions with the provisional teacher time period in the State of New Jersey (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a), which is a 2-year period before standard certification is issued. This change was implemented because the new school year began in September of 2019, in effect, restarting the clock for the first-year teacher population. Teachers in their first month of service have not been in the field long enough to have the experiences necessary to provide the rich detail (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012) necessary to participate in this research. Teachers within the provisional teacher time frame met the criteria for the study. That definition was also expanded to include all public school teachers in the State of New Jersey, K to 12.

This research was originally intended as a study of educators in a secondary public school setting. Due to the use of snowball sampling, the population was expanded, with Institutional Review Board permission, to all K to 12 public school teachers in their first or second year of service in the State of New Jersey. The main purpose of this expansion

was to facilitate access to possible participants identified through the snowball sampling process.

Six New Jersey state-certified and licensed full-time novice teachers, using the above definition, were recruited from K to 12 schools within the counties of Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic in Northern and Central New Jersey. As potential participants were identified through snowball sampling, I contacted those identified through personal email. The first six participants identified were those used for this research; therefore, no alternates were needed in this study. Snowball sampling worked well for this study as some of the novice teachers from the original outreach were able to recommend other possible novice teachers who might be appropriate for the research.

For this study, the six participants provided enough data to satisfy saturation. After I analyzed the data, there were common statements from the six participants and new information was not forthcoming. I decided that I had saturated the data collection and had rich information that supported the research questions. Adding additional participants would have become repetitive, so it was not necessary for this study (see Burkholder et al., 2016). The identities of all participants were concealed using pseudonyms. The capital letter P and a corresponding number (example: P1 – P6) were applied for each participant in audio recording interviews and data transcription.

The district factor groupings (DFGs) for each of the participant's schools ranged from CD to J. As previously mentioned, DFGs are an approximate calculation of the socioeconomic status (SES) of the community represented in the school by the State of New Jersey and are categorized from the lowest SES category (A) to the highest SES

category (J). The categories are as follows from lowest to highest: A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I, and J (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2018). In this study, there was a mixed grouping of DFGs, which allowed for perspectives from teachers who were working in various socioeconomic backgrounds. This offered varied perspectives from the novice teacher population in New Jersey about their experiences over several SES's within the first 2 years of teaching service. The viewpoint of varied perspectives is an important component of phenomenological studies (Burkholder et al., 2016).

The participants' years of service are noted in Table 1. Additionally, the participant's school districts include four categories of DFG's that indicate four distinct SES's among the six participants in the study. Specific DFGs were not identified due to confidentiality considerations.

Table 1

Participant Year of Service Within the Provisional Teacher Program

Participant pseudonym	Participant year of service
P1	Year 1
P2	Year 1
P3	Year 2
P4	Year 2
P5	Year 2
P6	Year 2

Participant Profiles

Participant profiles are focused on the years of service within the New Jersey PTP and the number of schools the interviewee worked in and are represented in the interview results in that 2-year time period (Table 2; see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a). This study included six total participants, five female participants and one male participant. Four of the participants were teaching specialists in one area of curriculum, and the other two participants in this study were individual grade level teachers. All of the participants for this study were K to 8 novice teachers in public school settings within the previously mentioned geographic areas of New Jersey. Other unique demographic data were not included to protect participant anonymity. Teachers in the PTP are establishing their careers, and this was a matter of consideration throughout the research process. This qualified novice teachers as potentially vulnerable for purposes of this study. As such, all participants, their individual school districts, and any potentially identifying information are concealed in this study.

Table 2

Number of School Districts Participants Worked During PTP (2 Years)

Participant pseudonym	Number of school districts worked in during PTP (2 Years)
P1	1
P2	1
P3	1
P4	1
P5	2
P6	2

Participant 1

Participant 1 (P1) recently completed Year 1 of teaching service in a public school district in the State of New Jersey. This participant shared a candid view of the lived experience of a New Jersey provisional teacher. This participant has served in one school district for the time frame served in the PTP (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Participant 2

Participant 2 (P2) was serving in Year 1 of teaching service in a public school in the State of New Jersey. This participant conveyed an honest and frank viewpoint of the social influences encountered in the daily lived experience of a New Jersey novice teacher. This participant has served in one school district for the time frame served in the PTP (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Participant 3

Participant 3 (P3) was serving in Year 2 of teaching service in a public school in the State of New Jersey. This participant communicated a real-life view of the New Jersey provisional teacher during the interview process. This participant has served in one school district for the time frame served in the PTP (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Participant 4

Participant 4 (P4) was serving in Year 2 of teaching service a public school in the State of New Jersey. P4 was straight-forward in communicating the perspective of the provisional teacher in relation to potential retention within the field. This participant has

served in one school district for the time frame served in the PTP (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Participant 5

Participant 5 (P5) was serving in Year 2 of teaching service a public school in the State of New Jersey. P5 had the experience of working in two school settings within the provisional teacher time frame. This participant was open and very forthcoming about the social encounters in both public school districts and offered a heartfelt contribution to this research.

Participant 6

Participant 6 (P6) was serving in Year 2 of teaching service in a public school district in the State of New Jersey. This participant was genuine and earnest in conveying the perspective of a New Jersey provisional teacher. This participant has served in two school districts for the time frame served in the PTP (see New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019a).

Data Collection

The Institutional Review Board at Walden University approved my study (approval #06-20-19-0634656). I then started identifying potential participants for my research using snowball sampling. In my study, I recruited six participants and conducted face-to-face interviews with each of the participants. I sent each potential participant an invitation via their personal email account. Each of the six research participants took part in a 30 to 60 minute, one time, face to face, interview with me as the researcher. Each interview took place at local libraries in the counties of Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic, in

Northern or Central New Jersey. All interviews were audio recorded. Each participant agreed to the audio recording to collect their data for this study. The audio recordings were later transcribed by the researcher. The only variation that occurred during data collection was the length of the interview, which varied as per the answers of each of the six participants. Seven interview questions were asked of each participant (Appendix B). There were no unusual circumstances encountered during the data collection process of this study.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Processes

Before transcription of each of the 6 interviews, I reviewed the notes from my researcher journals. I also reviewed the Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 70) established prior to the commencement of the data collection process, to determine and reflect my position as researcher, within the study. I listened to each interview several times before transcription. Transcribing the interviews took between 1 to 3 hours, depending on the length of the interview. Reading and listening to these interviews were key to understanding the fundamental nature of the participants, which allows for researcher awareness of the participant's perspective (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Saldaña, 2016). This also allowed for researcher immersion in the data, giving an accurate understanding of the participant experience (Burkholder et al., 2016). After transcribing each interview, the transcription was sent to each participant to verify for accuracy. Small typographical errors on two of the participant transcripts were noted and corrected. Each participant verified that the transcript was representative of their

interview. The first 6 participants provided enough information to reach saturation of the data, as no new information or unexplained phenomena emerged. According to Burkholder et al., (2016), that meets the qualifications of saturation within a qualitative study.

Initially, after reading and listening to each interview, I used “Tesch’s Eight Steps in the Coding Process” (Cresswell, 2014, p. 198); 1) Reviewing the whole, and noting ideas, 2) Reviewing one document for underlying meaning, and noting related ideas, 3) Making a list of all topics, grouping topics of a similar nature, 4) Bring that list back to the data, coded, to see if new codes or categories might be found, 5) Create descriptive wording for topics and transform them into appropriate categories, and find methods of category-list reduction through topic grouping, locating relationships within the data, 6) Decide on abbreviations for categories and then alphabetize codes, 7) Gather all category materials and place them together for the first analysis, and finally, 8) Recode the current data as needed. This led to a deeper understanding of the text and participant experience as generated by the data. This manual coding process was followed by NVivo 12 (NVivo, n.d.) analysis, which was then compared to the manual coding to develop the data themes. I started with a word query, then a text query with words of a similar nature to begin the analysis in NVivo 12. I reviewed those queries and word frequency analysis (Table 3) in comparison with my manually coded thematic material. Then I reviewed thematic material generated manually to the thematic material generated through use of NVivo 12. A total of five themes were generated in the research and each theme will be

discussed, using participant statements as support for each theme in the following section.

No discrepant cases were found within this research during the process of data analysis.

Table 3

Word Frequency Analysis

Word	Count	Weighted percentage
School	135	2.52
Teacher	110	2.05
Time	68	1.27
District	48	0.89
Kids	46	0.86
Decisions	41	0.76
Teaching	39	0.73
Experience	34	0.63
Administration	33	0.62
Social	32	0.60
Students	31	0.58
Work	31	0.58
Principal	30	0.56
Different	29	0.54
Lunch	29	0.54
Superintendent	27	0.50
Teach	27	0.50
Faculty	25	0.47
Room	25	0.47
Class	24	0.45
Question	24	0.45
Talk	24	0.45
Groups	22	0.41
Student	22	0.41
Classroom	21	0.39
Mean	21	0.39
Job	20	0.37
Parents	20	0.37

(table continues)

Word	Count	Weighted percentage
Together	20	0.37
Cliques	19	0.35
Environment	19	0.35
Stay	19	0.35
Mentor	18	0.34
Position	17	0.32
Help	16	0.30
Never	16	0.30
Questions	16	0.30
Staff	16	0.30
Ask	15	0.28
Person	15	0.28
Start	15	0.28
Subject	15	0.28
Classes	14	0.26
Team	14	0.26
Colleagues	13	0.24
Everyone	13	0.24
Hard	13	0.24
Influential	13	0.24
Longevity	13	0.24
Perspective	13	0.24
Point	13	0.24
Positive	13	0.24
Support	13	0.24
Talking	13	0.24
Whole	13	0.24
Administrators	12	0.22
Leave	12	0.22
Negative	12	0.22
Relationships	12	0.22
Union	12	0.22

Results by Theme

The five themes generated through data analysis in the study were; Teaching Responsibilities, Social Experiences, Novice Teacher Support, Organizational Decision-Making, and Career Longevity and Retention. As previously mentioned, to maintain protection of individual novice teacher identity any potentially identifying information had been removed and is noted with the use of ellipses (...). The results of data analysis yielded the following five themes for the study:

Theme 1: Teaching Responsibilities

This theme developed as participants described their first and second year experiences within their respective school settings. Each participant described similar, yet a unique perspective of their induction to their schools as new teachers. Participants 1 and 3 portrayed more of a positive viewpoint on their first-year experiences, while Participants 2, 4, 5 and 6 maintained different perceptions, based on school settings, school organizational experiences, and other socially-based factors or influences.

The theme of Teaching Responsibilities includes teacher job-related experiences that encapsulate basic teacher functions and operations. These experiences are unique to each position and level as required in order to facilitate instruction and effectively perform job duties throughout the school year, involving curriculum decisions, adjustment to school procedures and protocol, and mandated state requirements. As previously mentioned, these duties can be overwhelming for some novice teachers, especially within the first year of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

Participant 1 conveyed the feeling of being overwhelmed during the first year of

teaching. Despite that experience, P1 was able to relate that the first year of teaching reinforced an original desire to enter the teaching field.

P1 commented,

I think I am fortunate in that I know that teaching is what I want to do, and teaching is what I love, and my first year kind-of solidified that for me, but I can totally understand how some teachers are very, too far overwhelmed with it. I can completely see it. There were days when classes would leave my room and I just wanted to cry.

P1 further stated,

The only thing that I do have to say I felt in my first year was overwhelmed. There was just a lot of stuff, especially with 5 different grade levels, and 5 different grade levels of planning, having all of them in a day. And then I'm retaining all of what I'm supposed to teach, every single one of them, it did get a little discombobulated at times. It was very, very overwhelming.

P 2 communicated the feeling of being somewhat judged on teacher performance in the first year of teaching.

P2 stated,

You feel like you are being judged, or, yeah, like you're being judged. As you're teaching you know that you are competent, but you're also nervous because you are a first-year teacher. And so, I just have to keep relying on my gut, saying you do know what you are doing, and yes, there are things you can fix along the way, I know that, but it can be scary, and sometimes you wonder if it's in your head, like

they're probably not thinking that at all, right? But other times you do get that feeling, Oh, I could be judged, right? So, I did overall love my experience. I'm excited to go back, but I'm nervous just for typical reasons (...), So, I had a pretty good experience overall, my first year. But trying to break down those walls, and maybe form other friendships, or feeling like there isn't another wall there would be great.

P2 also noted,

This incoming year, we're starting a rotation (...) And, that was frustrating for me, to go into the last day of school and have a meeting before we left for the summer and say, "by the way, we're doing this new rotation", and they tried to spin it so that it seemed so positive. (...). And there are perks, I get to see the students on a more consistent basis, which means we get to have regular routines, they get used to seeing me every day, that's something I'm looking forward to. But in the end, planning-wise, for me, I don't feel as comfortable, and I think that's another reason I'm so nervous to start this whole new school year. And when we try to make some changes or talk to (administration) about it, there's just no other way. We tried, it was chaos trying to make the schedule, which I understand, it can be very chaotic making something new, but maybe they should have asked for our input.

P3 expressed a positive first year experience, with collegial collaboration and assistance with teacher responsibilities.

P3 commented,

Being a first-year teacher was great at our school, all the staff was very welcoming, and you never felt like any question was too stupid. They always answered any question that you had. My team leader directed me in anything I had extra, so any time I had to give a kid a detention, or write someone up, he always double checked it, if I had to send a parent email he always proof-read it, the language arts teacher would always look at it. And everyone was really a team player my first year.

P4 described the first year experience with feeling welcomed but not having support with curriculum, and concerned over the amount of negativity (gossip) displayed by some of the other teachers, and a politically charged environment at times.

P4 stated,

It was a couple things, scary, kind-of like a roller coaster, I felt like. Just in general, not specifically because of my school. I did feel very nervous all the time, just reflecting back to my first year. I mean, I just wanted to be good for the kids, but it's also just like so much, and I'm teaching multiple subjects, and I know that was a little stressful for me, and I'm teaching all the grades in my school as well, so it was a lot of curriculum that I had to write, and nothing to go off of, they didn't have any set curriculum for (...), at all, so it was like whatever I wanted it to be, which is nice but also scary so, I just was trying to build this, and so, I little scary, I mean nerve wracking, I remember being anxious going to work every day. My school, however, it was very welcoming, very warm. I did realize that there was a lot of teacher drama, which kind-of upset me a little bit. A lot of the teachers were

talking, gossiping about each other, and a little bit of negativity, so I kind of tried to stay away in that way.

P4 also stated,

So, I'm trying to think of my first year. There's so much, it's like where do I even go? The kids, in terms of my relationship with the kids, that was great, building a relationship with them, I feel like I'm the type of person that gets along with everybody, so I didn't really have a hard time getting along with the other teachers, and finding friends of whatever. I say friends with air quotes because I really don't consider any of them truly my friends. I feel like I also had a little bit of a wake-up call, and I don't know if this is just because of my district, the politics of being in public school, they care so much about how we look, and what the parent thinks, and what the board thinks, and that's kind-of what rules everything.

P5, having worked in two schools discussed two very different initial Experiences.

P5 commented,

So, this my second year teaching, and it's also my second full-time position, so I was somewhere else the year before, so I'm still a new second year teacher being at this district has been really good and also kind-of stressful because I don't find it to be organized. So, a lot of stuff that happens at this district is like last minute or not communicated with or something. Planning is like pretty loose around there. And they try, but there's a lot of stuff that keeps me from doing my job as well as I think it could sometimes. But something really great about that district is that my

colleagues are really amazing. And most of the administrators, with the exception of maybe one person, are really approachable, and they want to help. So, I think that's a really important thing that I was missing at my previous district, was that I feel totally comfortable with my colleagues, and the administrators. I feel like I can actually go to them for help, not because they say I can, but because I really feel like I can. And I've received a lot of support here, on things like SGO's, and what to do in certain situations. If I think of a question, I feel like I can ask it right away, which is great and has a huge impact on how comfortable I am. So those are the like the two main factors that I've seen there.

P6 has also worked in two different school settings and expressed being hired quickly, and not having enough information when entering the job. P6 expressed that the first school setting was familiar, due to past experiences at that school.

P6 stated of the second experience,

So, a fairly positive experience, and then switched to a new district this year where I was hired very, very quickly, and know nobody there. So, coming into my first day of new teacher training, I did not know my grade levels, I did not know the curriculum, I did not know much of anything whatsoever. I was fortunate that I was working with a colleague who was a little bit more informed than myself, because she was hired earlier on and had a chance to speak with the prior (...) teacher, and get a much better understanding of what the program was like what the requirements were like, she immediately filled in on a lot of the questions I had. And so, starting the school year, we've worked very well together to support each

other through some challenges that we've encountered, and some unusual situations.

Theme 2: Social Experiences

This theme emerged from participant perceptions of the magnitude, nature and scope of their social encounters, as novice teachers, with colleagues, administration, boards of education, and members of the educational community in their new positions as relayed through their lived experiences as novice teachers. Each teacher shared their experiences with social influences at their respective school in a candid and genuine manner. While some of the shared experiences were positive and indicative of positive social experiences for first or second year teachers, the majority were not. The predominance of the data procured portrayed negative social experience for various reasons. These experiences are the realities of these six teacher's perceptions and experiences. The participants described social experiences for their first two years of teacher service through the following narratives:

P1 mentioned the presence of grade level cliques within the school setting. P1 also noted age as a factor that has an impact on the surrounding environment.

P1 commented,

I do see cliques within the staff. I do see it within the grade levels and within people who have been there for multiple years and have made their relationships.

P1 further stated,

So, all the (...) teachers who have lunch and common planning time together every day, they are always together, or they will be in each-others rooms at the end of the

day, of before in the morning and be talking, spending their time associating with each other. I do see that in the two schools the cliques and environment can be different they change drastically.

P1 also noted,

I also see as a first-year teacher an age disconnect that happens with some of the friendships because I personally am (age) and most of the other teachers in my area older and are married with children.

P1 further commented,

I don't have the same lunch time everyday my lunch differs based on the day, this year (...) my lunch was at (...) in the morning which was not fun because I was the only one who had lunch at that time. I was in the teacher's lounge alone. (P1)

P2 openly conveyed social experiences that were somewhat intimidating in nature and discussed this through the following experiences.

P2 stated,

I feel like as a first-year teacher I never really had much opportunity to socialize outside of school with my colleagues.

P2 also stated,

I feel like a lot of the cliques, the social cliques, are grade-level and this happens particularly at my younger school. You'll go into lunch, all the (...) teachers sit together, all the (...), (...), and (...) teachers sit together, and sometimes they'll talk from across the room to each other, but it's like there's the tables, and I'm a naturally shy person, so sometime I understand that could come off as rude, and I

very much try to not make that the case. But I said I'm going to come out of my shell, I'm going to go and eat lunch, in the lunchroom. I'm going to meet new people. So, I went in my first few days, and it was packed, it was a tinier lunch room but there were still seats, so, I saw an open seat and I said "Is anybody sitting here? Is it ok?" and, oh that's so and so's seat, oh, yeah, you can't take that. I was like ok. And they said "but, not that we don't want you to sit with us, you can grab a chair, add it here", so now they made me feel welcome, but your sitting and they are talking, and some of them tried to get to know me, and I told them about myself, and I tried to get to know them, and their families. And then the person comes in and takes her seat, "oh my gosh, you guys didn't give away my seat, you guys are the best!" I felt like I was surrounded by my students again.

P2 also remarked,

And I heard this from the old (...) teacher, she said, "don't let my experience influence you, but I always ended up eating lunch in my room". Now I see why. So those grade level cliques are very much there and it's really hard to break down those walls. And I get it, they have common interests, they have their subjects that they teach, they plan common lessons. They have things to discuss. But there are still things to discuss (...), so there's all these different things, but I definitely feel grade level cliques. That's where it is.

P2 asserted,

I made my own personal decisions to not join the union. I never publicized it to anybody, I never said anything, but it definitely became known. (...) you feel a

wall between some teachers, because they will look at you differently, and again, it's nothing towards them, it's not that I don't feel that teacher's rights are important, I made my own personal decisions, financial was one of them. I cannot afford to do that at this moment. And moral reasons, for certain other things that (...) may promote or not promote, this might not be something that I agree with. That's ok, I don't judge anybody who does put their money towards that. I really, really, don't. But you feel it, especially from some of the older teachers. "Well, why aren't you doing it?". And, all of a sudden it goes from a "Hi, nice to see you!" to a "Hello." in the hallway. And I go "what did I do, what did I possibly do?", either you hear chit chat, sometimes I feel that teachers can be worse than the students, you hear it in the hallways, its bad, bad, gossip. To me that blows my mind! But I definitely feel that is one of the big groups that influences how I feel, and it doesn't necessarily effect how I teach, I'm going to teach how I would any way, but when you go out into the social aspect, going to the lunch room, now you feel uncomfortable, so now I'm going to eat in my classroom. Every lunch. Because I don't feel comfortable going in. Sometimes, I don't want to even go in to warm my lunch and come out, because you feel like, oh, (...) here". But I'm not the only one who's not in the union. There are approximately 30 other teachers but (...) I'm more well known, so something like that has affected my comfort level, around my colleagues (...), and that's something, again, that I'm not comfortable with, so they are a definitely a big group in the schools that don't make me feel too good. Participant 3 described a positive social experience within the school setting, and

expressed the need to not cause issues of concern as a non-tenured teacher.

P3 mentioned,

I don't really see the cliqueiness, because our building is just so big, you're in teams, so the majority of the time the people that I see are the people on my floor. I'm on the (...) floor. I'll see the teachers around me, and then every day, during my prep, I meet with my team, (...) teacher. And as far as administration, you don't see them unless it's an observation, or they are doing a walk-through.

P3 remarked,

So, my first experience was good. Because I knew if I needed something, if I needed to deal with anything, I could go to the administration, they have an open-door policy. I also have a really good team leader, he would push me in the right direction, as far as you should be doing this as a non-tenured teacher, versus like avoid these people because they go back and talk to administration. But I've heard horror stories with other people. So, I'm glad my experience was great.

P3 stated,

So, you keep your mouth shut. If people ask you to do things, you just do them. If, for example, my first year, (...) and last year I didn't know how to use the online program, to put in tickets for them, so this year (...) came into fix them, and (...) just started telling me how terrible it was, and I just took the blame for that because I'm a non-tenured teacher, and I didn't want it to come back that (teacher's name) is confrontational, (...) doesn't work well.

P3 further commented,

With the teams, it all depends on the different personalities within the teams. So, last year we stayed together, we had prep and then lunch, so every day were together for two hours.

P4 encountered various negative social experiences interspersed with some positive experiences described through the novice teacher perspective.

P4 stated,

Yeah. I specifically remember because it takes a lot for me to actually get upset, but I would just get so tired of it. So, like when I was doing lunch duty, for instance, I had lunch duty every day my first year, and I was with (...) and the two of them don't get along. So, depending on who I was with I was always hearing bad things about the other one. And I almost felt like, why am I working with people who act almost like the kids that I teach? Because it was just so much gossip and so much cattiness, like even at the end of the year, sorry this is going negative right now, and that's totally not where I like to go, but it's honest.

P4 further stated,

So, I experienced a lot of that, however, there are a lot of positive teachers in my school, that I feel like really care about the students, and really care about cultivating culture, and community within the school.

Additionally, P4 commented,

But, yeah, there is a lot of cattiness in the school and that really upset me the first year, because I am not a gossip, I don't want to gossip, I want to feel positive, because teaching is hard enough. And I feel that kind-of brings everything down.

Like brings the mood down. So, I was trying to stay away from that, but it's almost impossible to get away from it sometimes, but I do end up just eating lunch in my classroom, every day. Because I don't want to eat lunch in the, you know, the break room.

P4 remarked,

So, the break room is just all of that. "This kid's parents, negative, negative, negative, all that, so I just literally eat lunch in my classroom.

P4 mentioned,

Yes. So, our union people are really great. They're like phenomenal. They are my favorite people in the building. They really fight for us. And they are tenured teachers, they have been there for a while. I know that they are very vocal about things pertaining to teachers and contractual things, and things like that.

Additionally, P4 noted,

Where am I going to start? Like I said, there is a lot of gossip. And there are teachers who don't like each other. I think I'm just one of those people who people feel comfortable talking to, because, I feel like I always hear everything, and I'm just like uh huh, uh huh. I don't engage. But, especially with the older teachers, again there's a theme here with the older teachers, there's a lot of drama, it's silly, it's pointless. Like, I didn't like her tone in that faculty meeting. I'm like, come, on! Really?

P4 continued,

Like, I don't know if it's that they have been here for so long, and they've been at the same place with the same people in the same profession, and it's a stressful profession to begin with. I really understand in that way. It's not helping anything, so it is very frustrating. There are certain people in the building that people have told me, don't say anything because it goes straight to the Superintendent's ear, they can't be trusted. And it's like, why can't we just support each other? So, I definitely live in a little bit of fear, when it comes to, not that I'm hiding anything, but there are certain people that are just waiting for you to mess up so they can jump on it and make you look bad to the administration.

Lastly, P4 stated,

But again, there's also a lot of teacher's that are great (...) and things like that so there is so much positivity, but there is a bad crew too that try to steer clear of as much as possible. Yeah, like try to avoid like where they are because I don't want to get sucked in. Just because once that negativity is in me it's like a momentum, like it just starts spinning out, and then I'm going to bring that into the classroom with the kids. And that's the last thing I want to do. So, that's why I'm super against it, but I don't know.

P5 indicated different experiences in the two public school settings

P5 has worked in throughout the first and second year of novice teacher service.

P5 indicated,

So, this my second year teaching, and it's also my second full-time position, so I was somewhere else the year before, so I'm still a new second year teacher being at

this district has been really good and also kind-of stressful because I don't find it to be organized. So, a lot of stuff that happens at this district is like last minute or not communicated with or something. Planning is like pretty loose around there. And they try, but there's a lot of stuff that keeps me from doing my job as well as I think it could sometimes. But something really great about that district is that my colleagues are really amazing. And most of the administrators, with the exception of maybe one person, are really approachable, and they want to help. So, I think that's a really important thing that I was missing at my previous district, was that I feel totally comfortable with my colleagues, and the administrators.

P5 further stated,

I see that there are teachers who are more friendly, yeah, more friendly with each other than they are, I mean, they have the same lunch, or like the (...) teachers, the (...) teachers kind-of like their own clique, but other than that, outside of that, I think, even though we all have teams, (...) and even if you have multiple grade levels, you will be put on one team, but even though we are grouped in that way, I still think that there's not a lot of cliquey stuff going on, I think that for the most part everyone's really friendly with everyone else.

P5 noted,

So, what they tell us a lot in the program is that you will hear a lot of negativity in the faculty room, don't eat lunch in the faculty room. And then once I started seeing the districts that I was in for my student teaching and my clinical work, either the teachers didn't talk or like some teachers were like friends over here, but

then they would fight with other teachers, not like fight but argue. And they had their own opinions, and it wasn't like they were bad people, it was just they were really set in their own ways, and they knew what was best and everyone else was doing it wrong. And most of the time I saw the teachers were complaining about the administration, I've seen a lot of complaining among the teachers. (...) So, I guess what I'm saying is that I've seen it and I've heard how negative their districts are. So, when I came to this district, and saw that, I really haven't seen a lot of arguing, or a lot of like really strong-headed, like close the door idea. I haven't seen teachers shut themselves off from the rest of them or overly complain about administrators, there is one administrator that's kind-of tough, and intense, it's a couple complaints here and there, but we are all really in a space where we're all just helping each other, but other than that, but it's sense of relief not having to worry about negative politics, and what they going to think of me, if I'm overstepping my boundaries and stuff like that. So, it's more of a community sense there, which I can really understand.

P5 also commented,

So, I do want to say, so this district is great, I am happy here, my last district I actually had wanted to leave, and there are some pretty good reasons why, which I wanted to share. So, the other teachers for the most part were great, there were a lot of new teachers, I noticed that there was a lot of turnover at that school, I forget how many (...) teachers there were, but it always went back to the (...) teacher who is now the (...). So, (...) ended up being my mentor, it was my first year, and (...)

just like, nothing was really good enough for her, and (...) has a lot of say. (...) brags about how (...) is best friends with the (...), and this other administrator, and (...) shouldn't, but (...) kind-of does have a lot of influence in the decision-making. Not a lot but like certain decisions (...) was able to pressure the (administrator) on, because he was new and (...) just stomps around, kind-of. So, it was kind-of oppressive, to a degree, where I felt like, I did not feel comfortable there. It was her and the (administrator). You feel like you're being judged and like you're being watched all the time. I could not walk the halls without feeling like I was being watched even though no one was there. So, it was very nerve-wracking just the environment between encounters that I've had with the (...). With (..) would pretend like (...) was enthusiastic, and really nice, (...) wanted the best for us, but then (...) would like you know, turn on us really quickly. Yeah. So, it was all great and good, but as soon as you made a mistake, they would turn on you. And like, I think they made me cry twice during that school year. (...) And it was just to make you feel really, really bad about yourself, for making this mistake. Like it was a huge deal, and you really blew it. (...) So, it was like that kind-of all year. So, I definitely had not wanted to stay in that district. And that was definitely the reason why. Just one or two people can ruin it for a person.

P6 also worked in two different public school settings for the first two years of service as a novice teacher. P6 expressed the social experience of grade-level cliques within the school, and cliques of first year teachers that are supportive of other new teachers within those social groups.

P6 stated,

I'll start with my first position, it's different and similar for both. I talked a little bit in the first question about my relationships with my colleagues, and in my first position, because I was half-time, in one of my buildings my office space was the faculty room. Which was wonderful. So, I would get there about (...), and lunch would start about (...), and I would usually sit by myself, with one teacher who probably also sat by herself when I wasn't at that building. But there were the grade level cliques, and all that kind of thing. It never really was a problem for me in any way, towards the end of the year I got better relationships, I spoke more to people, but I personally am not somebody who goes out of their way to socialize, so I stayed by myself through most of the year, but I was perfectly happy to stay by myself and get some work done, but for most of the year it wasn't a negative relationship, but I certainly saw an action that there were that (level) teachers, (level) grade teachers, etc.

P6 commented,

Administrators could have been on another planet, socially, very supportive professionally, but in that position, there was not as much of a social connection between administration and faculty.

Additionally, P6 noted,

The faculty room is right in the main office, and the door closes when the teachers come in for lunch. And that closed door means nobody is hearing what the teachers

are talking about, and that's best for everyone because they need a place to vent.

But the same cliques, same kind of thing and again, for me, not a negative experience, and I have my own clique, really, of first year teachers, who we sit and talk and complain and eat lunch, and as I said before it's a good opportunity for all of us to vent and get some of those frustrations out in the air instead of just holding them in, and resenting them.

Theme 3: New Teacher Support

The theme of New Teacher Support emerged from patterns in the data that established a theme of participant viewpoints of supportive and non-supportive measures for the novice teacher population. These supportive measures came from many areas within the educational community, and represent colleagues, administration, mentors and other stakeholders within the educational community.

P1 discussed the importance of administrative, mentor, collegial support during the first year of teacher service.

P1 stated,

Whenever there is an issue, and my Principals, I'm lucky, are both very supportive of their staff, and of (subject). So, whenever there is a decision that needs to be made that pertains to me, I tend to just go to one of the two of them, and they communicate with each other, but they also listen to what the teachers need. My one Principal is very, very trusting, of her staff and is, not as questioning of us doing our jobs but of how to help us do it better. She trusts that the people that she

has hired do their job, and she obviously checks in on us, but she has a strong belief in who she has, which contributes to our, kind-of, school community, a lot.

P1 also commented,

I enjoy that both of my administrators enjoy what I do, and value what I do in my classroom.

P1 remarked,

I actually was able to go my mentor at my current school and discuss this with her without feeling uncomfortable. Which is good because originally, I was scared, I was like how do I mention this to another teacher without it being spread around (...)? I didn't want people to think that. My mentor and I had developed a good relationship.

P2 also discussed administration as being supportive during the novice teacher time period.

P2 remarked,

I have a very, very supportive administration for most part. They do want things to work, but they didn't seek my input for it, but that's another story. Administration I do feel supports me, and they're good.

P2 noted,

I do have my teachers that I know or my colleagues that I know that I can, if I have a serious question or something that I need advice on that I can turn to. I know that the (subject) teacher and I get along very well, and if I am sending an email to a parent that I need proof-read I can happily email it to her or bring it to her room and

she will help me proof-read and vice-versa before or after. Even when we share preps one of us will stop in the others room and talk about however our day is going.

P3 described an experience in previous statements that included support from both administration and departmental colleagues, however P3 expressed dissatisfaction in the mentoring experience.

P3 commented,

As far as mentor teachers, I think it's ridiculous that we need to pay another teacher to mentor us, when I think I talked to mine twice the whole year. And she kept the money, I was annoyed by that.

P4 described an experience of support, in part, from certain colleagues, the union, (as previously stated), and administration during the first two years of novice teaching.

P4 stated,

For the most part, our administration is pretty pro teacher (...) I believe, but again, I know that their main focus is impressing the parents, making the parents happy, that's the big thing. That's like the number 1 priority. However, I would consider them pro teacher.

P5 maintained a perception of new teacher support from two separate and opposing school setting vantage points. P5 found mentor support to be helpful in a current workplace setting, and non-supportive in a former workplace setting.

P5 stated,

And I've received a lot of support here, on things like SGO's, and what to do in certain situations. If I think of a question, I feel like I can ask it right away, which is great and has a huge impact on how comfortable I am. So those are the like the two main factors that I've seen there.

P5 remarked,

So, it was this environment, where if you had an idea, they could either let you try and like not help you and watch you fail, or they would just kind-of shrug it off, it's hard to describe, but it was very, I never felt like I was doing ok there, I never felt like I was doing anything right. Because I felt like I was begin watched, and I felt like they were waiting for me to mess up, and by "they", I mean my mentor at the time.

P6 also had two different workplace settings within the novice teacher time frame. P6 discusses some perceptions of support from colleagues, good perceptions of administrative support, and support from colleagues.

P6 commented,

So, I had a fairly positive experience, always had strong support for those colleagues I had existing relationships with. Less strong support from individual colleagues I did not have existing relationships with, the homeroom teachers.

P6 remarked,

So, fair experience my first year, but my support from the administration was very, very strong.

P6 also stated,

Administrator support in my new school is fantastic. They are extremely supportive, extremely positive of everything we do.

P6 noted,

I was fortunate that I was working with a colleague who was a little bit more informed than myself, because she was hired earlier on and had a chance to speak with the prior (...) teacher, and get a much better understanding of what the program was like what the requirements were like, she immediately filled in on a lot of the questions I had. And so, starting the school year, we've worked very well together to support each other through some challenges that we've encountered, and some unusual situations. There are things that we both think could be done a little bit better, so we are able to commiserate together, and that's a good way for both of us to vent without having any other relationships in the building.

Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making

The theme of Organizational Decision-Making emerged from patterns in the data that founded and highlighted participants perceptions and those individuals or groups within their school who influence the decision-making process within their respective workplaces. These groups were represented by administration, the union, representative boards of education, and specified groups of colleagues. Additionally, some participants discussed limited input, as novice teachers, in the decision-making processes at their respective schools.

P1 discussed the support of administration in decision-making as being important to the novice teacher journey.

P1 stated,

So, whenever there is a decision that needs to be made that pertains to me, I tend to just go to one of the two of (administrators), and they communicate with each other, but they also listen to what the teachers need.

P1 commented,

I think if I did not have my mentor as my mentor the first year my decision-making would have been a bit more sporadic. I wouldn't have known. I am just lucky, I have friends who had (other subject) teachers as their mentors when they are (subject) teachers, and they didn't really have that connection. I am very lucky that I did, and that I was constantly able to work off of her and like learn about workshops and grad classes that I could take to help what I'm doing and that helped in this. But she definitely influences a lot of my decisions in a better way.

P2 described lack of teacher input in decision-making in the school setting as unpleasant and non-collaborative during the novice teaching years.

P2 stated,

But in the end, planning-wise, for me, I don't feel as comfortable, and I think that's another reason I'm so nervous to start this whole new school year. And when we try to make some changes or talk to (administration) about it, there's just no other way. We tried, it was chaos trying to make the schedule, which I understand, it can be very chaotic making something new, but maybe they should have asked for our input.

P2 commented,

So little things like this make me feel uncomfortable, and you know going to work, you feel like, if my opinion is not valued, and what I'm teaching is not valued, then almost what is the point? And you have to remember that you are going for the kids, and that you're doing it for the kids, but it can be very difficult. Because, even though I'm new, shouldn't my voice still matter? And it's a little bit of a struggle for me there, so, I think sometimes decisions are made without our input, and that's not something I'm a huge fan of.

P3 provided a viewpoint of decision-making in the school setting as very guided and dictated in the novice teacher time frame.

P3 remarked,

Pretty much, it's pretty open as far as like what you want to do, you can do as far as if you want to have a google classroom, or a google site, but our (subject) curriculum is very strict, with we have a pacing guide, so we know what days of the week we need to be doing what activity. We can make it longer or shorter, but then it's like your giving or taking from other days. Our lesson plans are done for us, as a (subject) teacher. So, we just put in our do now's and our homework. And as far as like switching up your lessons, you're really supposed to follow the lesson plan that given to us, that we get trained on. So as far as making a lot of decisions, I don't need to, it's given to me. But, yeah, I don't really make a lot of decisions, because everything's already told, you need to do X, Y, and Z, so I do X, Y, and Z.

P4 shared the experience of seniority, or teachers who have been at the school for a long time having direct influence in the decision-making process.

P4 commented,

Yeah, I mean I think a lot of it as well is just teachers who have been there for a long time. So, our (teacher), for instance, used to teach another subject and now (...) a (teacher). I guess (...) is in kind-of an administrative position, but I know that (...) is heavily influenced with decision-making with our (administrator) and our (administrator). So, I feel like it's almost seniority. It's like a lot of teachers that have been there for a while.

P5 also related that long time staff members have significant influence in school organizational decision-making processes.

P5 stated,

So, (...) kind-of does have a lot of influence in the decision-making. Not a lot but like certain decisions (...) was able to pressure the (administrator) on, (...). So, it was kind-of oppressive, to a degree, where I felt like, I did not feel comfortable there.

P6 shared the decision-making in the participant's current school setting is somewhat challenging, and focused on the chain of command, the influence of administration, and the lack of formalized organizational processes.

P6 noted,

The chain of command and logistics in my position seem very, very challenging.

P6 stated,

Again, in my school-setting it seems very haphazard. If there's problems, teachers are most left to their own devices to solve them.

P6 further stated,

So, in terms of who had the most influence and who is guiding the conversation most, it seems that the (administration), for the side of the school district is taking the most direct intervention.

Theme 5: Career Longevity and Retention

The theme of Career Longevity and Retention emerged from patterns in the data that determined participants viewpoints regarding career-related longevity and retention in their respective workplaces. Each participant outlook varied depending on their respective school situations and lived experiences as novice teachers. P1 expressed the desire to remain in the career and school, but at the same time expressed concern regarding job security within the position. P2 discussed the need to wait for that determination and see what transpires in the next school year. P3 indicated that it was important to have job security and expressed that tenure was significant to that decision. P4 discussed potential exploration of opportunities after tenure. P5 indicated the desire to remain in a collaborative and congenial school setting similar to P5's current school, and P6 described the population of veteran teachers and their daily negative attitudes as influential in the desire to remain in P6's current school setting.

P1 stated,

I, personally, would love to continue teaching at my school, the school I am in has a very supportive foundation for what I do. I enjoy that both of my administrators enjoy what I do, and value what I do in my classroom. As an arts teacher that is not always the case. So, it can be worrisome for some teachers, that they are worried

about whether or not their job is going to be cut to part time alone the next year, or whether or not they will be moved to a different school every year, or whether or not they will have to sub for Spanish classes. I have a friend who had to sub for a (...). I'm lucky that I don't have the scenario, I personally love the grade level that I teach, and I find it very fun.

P1 also commented,

So, I sometimes worry that well maybe there is something better out there, but I have don't have any personal issues with my setting that I don't think I would want to leave it any time soon. If something were to change, you never know, but then you get scared about, well I've already put 3 years in toward my tenure, so if I leave now, what am I going to lose? Which is something people often say to me, so I'm like alright, so essentially by year 3, I have to make the decision to either keep doing well and stay here, or start looking to go somewhere else, which is kind of crazy.

P2 noted,

Depends on how this school year goes. Honestly, a few of the co-workers that I have bonded with are incredible. I have one (...) teacher that teaches across the hall from me she's wonderful. The (...) teacher I actually didn't have the chance to teach with last year because she was on maternity leave. And I met her now, and she's so great, and we're going to get along just well. And then I have the (...) teacher, and the (...) teachers, and we get along really, really great. And so, I would want to stay for that part of the social aspect. Teaching wise, I was very, very burnt

out by the time I finished, I was very overwhelmed by the time I finished school in June. A lot of people said that's just your first year teaching, it's always going to feel that way, which I understand, and I know I came in and I didn't have very much time to plan, I was doing a lot on the fly, because I didn't have this job in the summer time. But a lot of it was also, I feel, lack of respect from students.

P3 remarked,

So, once again, with longevity, I don't really look at those, I know I have many more years before I even hit longevity. But as far as tenured, I know it's 4 years and a day now. So, it's just making it to the 4 years and a day to know that you're secure.

P4 commented,

My first year of teaching it was like I want to get out of here. Like now. I remember in the middle of the year I actually was looking for other jobs, because I was so fed up with all the drama, and the negativity. I also was having a hard time connecting because (...). So, it was just so hard for me to understand the ungratefulness amongst the students and even the teachers, because they are all from the same area. So, I had a hard time connecting because I felt like none of them were grateful for anything, I mean to me, we work in a golden school. Like we don't have to worry about our lives when we go to school. Like our kids are not getting into fights every day, they are not selling drugs, they don't even bring their cell phones to class, that's how naïve and sheltered they are. So, to me it's like what more could they ask for? But I guess people will find something wrong with

everything. So, getting back to your question, I know that in my first year I was very frustrated with the negativity of the atmosphere, overall. But once I started to get toward the end of the year, I realized that it was better for me to focus on my job. Just focus on the kids that I'm teaching, focus on what I'm doing. And that really helped me. And now I think I want to go get my Master's, somewhere not in this area, so I think once I get tenure, I'll probably say goodbye, and do something else, maybe we'll see. I don't know. I'm a little back and forth, but as of right now I think I'll be there like 3 years. Like 3 or 4 years.

P5 stated,

I think, I would like, this is the first time that I would actually like to stay here for a long time. Mostly because of the great community that's there. If you had asked me two weeks ago, I would have said I'm trying to find a way to quit right now.

Because it was the beginning of the year and it was a lack of planning, and they are filling my schedule with something called (subject) which I never heard of before.

P6 commented,

So, I actually was thinking about this a lot at the beginning of the school year. In both schools I found a lot of very, very, jaded, frustrated, older teachers. I find that, by and large, teachers who have worked for a while are not very happy that they are doing what they are doing. And I cannot count on two hands the amount of times I have been told not to stay in the profession, to go to grad school and switch to administration, or something like that.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness for this research was evaluated using “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188). Trustworthiness demonstrates the rigor, and quality of the study, and validates the importance of the topic for purposes of the research (Levitt et al., 2017)

Issues Regarding Trustworthiness

Credibility

As an educator, it was important to this study that I maintain awareness of any possible researcher biases in order to reduce bias in the research. Credibility in this research was established in the reflexivity of researcher notes, and researcher journaling. Triangulation was established through the use of interviews, member checks of translated narratives, researcher journals, and the word frequency list used to generate manually developed categories and themes (Burkholder et al., 2016). These journals provided insight into my own thoughts before, during and after participant interviews, and the transcription process. Reflexibility through utilization of a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo provided a foundation for identification of researcher biases throughout the research process. Additionally, during the data collection process, participants were reassured of anonymity of both personal identity and school district identity in the study. Each of the participants received the same treatment throughout the study and were asked the same questions. Additionally, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of each participant, in order to increase the feeling of ease within the research process.

Transferability

Thick description was employed to create transferability for this research.

Transferability in qualitative research indicates how conveyable the findings of one study relate to similar research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2004, 188). This study included a mix of participant genders, teaching grade levels, and curriculum content. All of the participants within this study were K-8 novice teachers in public school settings within the noted geographic areas of New Jersey. Each participant's school District Factor Grouping (DFG), denoting approximate socioeconomic status (SES) calculation by the State of New Jersey, ranged from CD to J. This is a fair representation of DFG range. The lower SES DFG's (A and B) are not represented in this study. As a result, the study includes a range of lower-middle SES to the highest level SES in the State of New Jersey. Ravitch & Carl (2016) stated that thick description captures the significance and relevance of the participant experience. Each participant interview was transcribed accurately, and reflected the answers provided. Accuracy was verified by each participant.

Confirmability

The researcher's ability to remain objective is paramount to confirmability within qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Maintaining awareness of my own biases throughout my study was important to the assurance of confirmability for this study. Use of a Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 70), journaling, and notes were valuable to establish confirmability and ascertain quality within this study. This allowed for reflective practices in the identification of my own

predispositions and biases throughout the research process. This awareness provided an opportunity to lessen these issues for the benefit of the study.

Bracketing (Burkholder et al., 2016) was also implemented to alleviate possible issues resulting from preconceptions about the topic on the part of the researcher.

Bracketing, in the form of memos and notes was used to set aside my own bias or preconceived notions during the analysis phase of this study. This helped to identify codes and individual themes for the study (Tufford & Newman, n.d.).

The concept of bridling (Dahlberg, 2006) was also utilized in this study, as a means to reduce researcher bias, as well as provide a focus on the phenomenon as a whole throughout the interview (Vagle, Hughes, & Durbin, n.d.). Bridling allows the researcher to have the “space” necessary to view the phenomenon from the participant (Dahlberg, 2006; Vagle et al., n.d.). Bridling provided perspective and allowed necessary distance for me to develop clarity and objectivity in my interpretation of the chosen research phenomenon. Vagle et al., (n.d.) stated “choosing a phenomenon of interest is not a neutral decision” (p. 348), and therefore it is crucial to the quality of the research to bridle our assumptions and understandings as researchers. Before each interview I journaled and reviewed my thoughts and reflections, paying attention to any areas of bias. I then reviewed my Researcher Identity/Positionality Memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), and reminded myself of the importance of setting aside my own position and focusing on the participant experience without interruption, or “jumping to conclusions”. Bridling allowed me, as the researcher, to listen to each interview to hear the meaning of the

experience from the participant's viewpoint, and to ask for verification or clarification when appropriate.

All data for this study was collected through individual, face-to-face interviews. After the interview process, I thoroughly reviewed all researcher notes and journals implemented for this study. Additionally, I also listened to each interview several times before beginning the transcription process. I transcribed each interview and verified it by each participant for accuracy. After transcription, I reread and listened to each interview before beginning "Tesch's Eight Steps in the Coding Process" (Creswell, 2014, p. 198). I used NVIVO 12 (NVivo, n.d.) for data analysis in this study. I started with a word frequency query (Table 3). Manually coded material was compared to thematic material generated through NVIVO 12. All conclusions emerged from the generated data, researcher notes, lists, and journaling during the experience, and the analytic choices determined by myself as researcher. The data will be stored for a period of five years. Data from paper sources will be stored in a locked file cabinet. All data from electronic sources will remain securely stored in the researcher's password protected computer files. At the five year mark all paper sources will be shredded, audio recordings deleted, and other electronic data and summaries deleted.

Dependability

Researcher notes were used as audit trails in this study to enhance dependability (Burkholder et al., 2016; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Multiple reviews of participant transcripts from interviews, as well as researcher notes and journals that encapsulated my

thoughts during the research process also provided support for dependability in this study.

The phenomenological research design for this study emerged from the study's research questions, and using this design allowed me to fully explore social influences, decision-making and career retention of novice teachers through the lived experiences of the participants. This alignment, through design, strengthens the dependability of the study. Also enhancing the study's dependability, the data collection method using interviewing aligned with the needs of the research, as well as the research design. The role of the researcher was fully explained to each participant before the interview process, to reduce bias and augment dependability. Further, the research for this study was directly connected to the study's conceptual framework, inclusive of the Social Identity Theory (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and the Social Categorization Theory (Reicher et al., 2012).

Results

The results of this research are organized by research question, with corresponding tables to illustrate the evidentiary support.

Research Question 1

Social influences, defined for this research, is the means by which individuals either consciously or unconsciously influence the motivation or attitudes of others (Pinder, 2008). Support for Research Question 1 is shown by participant statements narrating their experiences of social influences within the workplace in Table 4.

In relationship to Research Question 1: From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace? The data suggests that the presence of both positive and negative social experiences exist within the novice teacher experience. Each of the participants described various social issues across three themes in the data; Theme 2: Social Experiences, Theme 3: Novice Teacher Support, and Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making. The thematic data for Theme 1: Social Experiences related to this research question indicated that positive social influences and situations were experienced during novice teacher work experience by P1, P3, and somewhat by P6. Each of these participants described somewhat pleasant and workable collaborations in the workplace, in general. Conversely, negative social influences and situations were experienced during the novice teacher work experience by P2, P4, and P5. In the cases of P2, P4, and P5, each lived experience was different in content however the level of negativity was described as almost unfair, overbearing and repressive. The novice teachers in this study commented on several groups, in terms of social experiences, within their respective school settings. The participants mentioned; the presence of cliques within their school (P1, P2, P4, and P6). Other participants did not report any group-related cliques in their current settings (P3, and P5). Additionally, the topic of veteran teachers was discussed in relation to the school social environment by some of the participants. P1 discussed an age disconnect with the veteran teaching staff, P2 discussed pressure to join the union from the veteran teaching staff, P4 identified a theme of social issues, mostly drama, with the veteran teaching staff, P6 discussed the veteran teacher population in terms of not appearing happy in their teaching, and as seeming to

have a conflicts with administration. The interpretation of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

The theme of New Teacher Support yielded descriptions of groups or individuals that were socially and professionally influential within the novice teacher time frame. Novice teachers discussed the influence of mentors, unions, and administration in relation to their first and second year of teaching service. P1 and P3 discussed perceptions of mentor relationships, P2 discussed teacher to teacher support, P4 discussed positive union relationships, P5 discussed both experiences with negative and positive collegial and mentor relationships within two separate school settings, and P6 indicated that administration professionally supportive but not socially involved with teachers.

Lastly, the Theme of Organizational Decisions-Making illustrated mentor significance (P1), lack of novice teacher “voice” in workplace decision-making (P2), seniority as influential in the decision-making process (P4), and specified teachers who appeared to have great sway over decision-making processes (P5). Implications of these results will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

Table 4

Main Themes Supporting RQ1

Research Question 1	Main themes supporting RQ1	Evidence supporting RQ1 – Participant statements
From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace?	Theme 2: Social experiences	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	Theme 3: Novice teacher support	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	Theme 4: Organizational- decision-making	P1, P2, P4, P5

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 examines viewpoints of the participants in this study regarding workplace decision-making. These perspectives are illustrated in Table 5. Each of the participants described various situations involving organization decision-making through lived novice teacher experience across two themes in the data; Theme 1: Teaching Responsibilities, and Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making. It has been suggested higher levels of staff turnover are associated with perceptions of limited organizational decision-making abilities (Albright et al., 2017). Therefore, the data findings for this research question are significant in acquiring information for better

understanding of teacher retention regarding organizational decision-making in the school environment. The themes related to Research Question 2 involved teaching responsibilities and instructional duties in an everyday context. Participants discussed the assistance of mentors (P1), overwhelming curricular decisions (P2), keeping quiet and not saying anything to disturb the status quo (P3), influence of a board of education (P4), influential teachers in the workplace (P5), and disorganization of decision-making within a school setting (P6).

Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making yielded the following data in relation to Research Question 2; the involvement of administration (P1, P5, and P6), again, the limited input of novice teachers in the decision-making process (P2), union involvement in the decision-making process (P3 and P4), involvement of the board of education (P6), confusion and disorganization in the chain of command and decision-making process (P6). The implications of these results will be elaborated in Chapter 5 of this study.

Table 5

Main Themes Supporting RQ2

Research Question 2	Main themes	Evidence supporting RQ2 – Participant statements supporting RQ2
From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of decision-making in the workplace?	Theme 1: Teaching responsibilities	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	Theme 4: Organizational decision-making	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 for this study stated: At what point do novice teachers become aware of social influence in relation to decision-making in the workplace? This question examines participant perspectives of awareness of social influences within the workplace. These descriptions of participant's lived experiences regarding this awareness are illustrated in Table 6.

Each participant was asked to describe their experience with social groups or cliques among the administration, faculty and staff members, and was also asked to describe the social environment among teachers at their school. The data were analyzed across two themes; Theme 2: Social Experiences, and Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making. Within Theme 1, Social Experiences, Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 each

illustrated examples of somewhat negative experiences with either social groups or the social environment in general. P5 reported, due to team-based structure of the school and the larger size of the building population, no apparent negative social experiences, and described positive collegial interactions with colleagues in the school setting.

Within Theme 2: Organizational-Decision Making, the participants indicated lack of involvement in decision-making processes (P2), strong board of education influence in decision-making processes (P4), and challenges with decision-making processes in respective school settings. In relation to the above research question, it is apparent that novice teachers become aware of social influences, both positive and negative, within the first year of teaching. These influences have a broad range of impact and Chapter 5 of this study will illustrate the implications of these results.

Table 6

Main Themes Supporting RQ3

Research Question 3	Main themes supporting RQ3	Evidence supporting RQ3 – Participant statements
At what point do novice teachers become aware of social influence in relation to decision-making in the workplace?	Theme 2: Social experiences	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	Theme 4: Organizational decision-making	P2, P4, P6

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked specifically; What role does social influence and group or team-based decision-making play in the novice teacher's perspective to remain in the teaching profession? It has been determined that multiple causes influence teacher retention (Adams & Woods, 2015), and germane to those contributory factors, the three themes within the data that represented this research question were; Theme 2: Social Experiences, Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making, and Theme 5: Career Longevity and Retention. These discussions of participant lived experiences in relation to these themes are illustrated in Table 7.

Each participant was asked about their thoughts on longevity at their current school. For Theme 2: Social Experiences, the participants described; being content in their current setting (P1, P5, and P6), contemplation of different, possibly better, work situations (P1), waiting to see how the next year plays out (P2), being fed up with the negativity in the environment (P4), being driven out by negativity in year 1 (P5), being told to leave the profession as soon as possible multiple times (P6).

For Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making, the participants commented; frustration in lack of curricular organization and additional last-minute assigned workloads increased thoughts of leaving the job (P5), and demographic, population, and policy changes have increased job frustrations as well as thoughts of job longevity in general.

For Theme 5: Career Longevity and Retention, the participants discussed; continuing in their current school situation, however, expressing concerns about job security (P1), experiencing teacher "burn-out" by the end of the school year, and wanting

to see how the next year plays out to make any decisions (P2), just making it to tenure status (4 years and 1 day – in the State of New Jersey) for job security (P3), leaving in about 3 to 4 years, possibly, to pursue a Master's degree (P4), after getting acclimated, remaining in the current school setting (P5), and despite being passionate about teaching a particular subject, some teachers are trying to leave the field due to negative circumstances (P6). A large part of the results indicated that negativity or negatively related challenges, in some form, socially, or in organizational decision-making plays a role in novice teacher thoughts regarding attrition. Kelly and Northrop (2015) indicated novice teachers frequently chose to leave extraordinarily challenging teaching situations. The implications of these, and other results will be detailed in Chapter 5 of this study.

Table 7

Main Themes Supporting RQ4

Research Question 4	Main themes	Evidence supporting RQ4 – Participant statements supporting RQ4
What role does social influence and group or team-based decision-making play in the novice teacher's perspective to remain in the teaching profession?	Theme 2:	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6
	Social experiences	
	Theme 4:	P5, P6
	Organizational decision-making	
	Theme 5:	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6.
	Career longevity and retention	

Summary

In summary, Chapter 4 discussed the setting and demographic information for the research, along with the data collection process and procedures for the data analysis of the study. Issues of trustworthiness; credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability were addressed. The five themes that emerged in the data analysis phase of this study were; Teaching Responsibilities, Social Experiences, Novice Teacher Support, Organizational Decision-Making, and Career Longevity and Retention. Lastly, the results of this research were highlighted through evidence as demonstrated by participant statements and quotes in relation to each of the four research questions posed for this study.

Chapter 5 will provide conclusions, interpretations and implications of the research results determined in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will also discuss the limitations of this study, and any recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to describe the lived experiences of social influence and decision-making within the workplace for novice teachers K to 12 in the State of New Jersey. The main objective of this study was to better understand these experiences to provide an enhanced perspective of novice teacher attrition. The research conducted was qualitative and used a phenomenological approach. The themes that emerged from the data analysis of this study were teaching responsibilities, social experiences, novice teacher support, organizational decision-making, and career longevity and retention.

In Chapter 5, I discuss conclusions and interpretations of the findings of this study as they pertain to each individual research question, current literature, and the contextual framework for this study. Recommendations for continued or future research within the field of Industrial Organizational Psychology, as well as how the research pertains to school and educational organizations, is discussed, along with likely implications of the study's findings. Lastly, I discuss limitations of the research and the possible positive social change implications derived from the conclusions of this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

For each of the four research questions in this study, I describe the results in order to confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge. I also interpret the findings of this study using the following theoretical framework described in Chapter 2: SIT (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008) and SCT (Reicher et al., 2012).

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of social influence in the workplace? This research question was created to focus on the lived experience of the novice teacher about social influences experienced in the workplace. The data analysis yielded three main themes for this research question: (a) Theme 2: Social experiences, (b) Theme 3: Novice teacher support, and (c) Theme 4: Organizational decision-making. These themes confirm and extend knowledge summarized in Chapter 2 of this study.

The theme of social experiences confirms and extends the current scholarly literature. The participants in this study expressed varied social experiences from their perspectives. Participants in this study described both positive and negative lived social experiences in the workplace. Those participants who described negative social experiences appeared to be genuinely impacted by the negativity and toxicity within their circumstances. Feelings of isolation and other similar negative social encounters prohibit the establishment of novice educator identities (Frey, 2018). A social environment that is unaccepting, isolating, and intimidating could prove to be detrimental to a teacher's desire to remain in such a position for a lengthy period of time. Novice teachers direct their newfound careers based on their individual experience and cues from the social environment (Pogodzinski, 2015). Therefore, a novice teacher's social experience within a school setting is formative. Further, this type of social experience would certainly make an impact on a teacher's professional identity and self-concept within the workplace, as

teacher's self-concept had been identified as important in matters of career satisfaction (Zasyarkin et al., 2015).

The presence of social groups or cliques within represented school settings (current or past) was identified by five out of the six participants in the study. It is likely and somewhat expected that a new teacher is going to face challenges with existing climate and culture when starting at a new workplace (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). However, in some of the lived experiences of the participants in this study, the challenges appeared to be extreme, to the point of exclusion at times. This is important to the premise of this research in that novice teachers who experience these types of social situations might choose to look for a position that is more collaborative, collegial, and inclusive. In the case of this study, of the five participants who noticed social groups or cliques in their schools, two expressed the desire to stay in their current workplace, while three were uncertain of their intentions for longevity in their schools at the time this study was conducted. One explanation for this finding is that the social consequences of groups or cliques within a work setting hinder the ability of new employees to integrate into the workplace environment. Social experiences can be a critical reason for any employee to decide upon their workplace as a "forever home," so to speak. New employee transition or adjustment to the workforce can be directly associated not only with issues related to retention but to overall job performance and attitudes (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). The process of organizational socialization is ongoing in nature and typically takes a 6-month time period (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013). Cable et al., (2013) indicated that employee socialization experiences

that allowed for individualized expression was directly associated with increased levels of customer service and worker retention. This was compared to other forms of socialization, such as through organizational identity (organizational pride) or more traditional organizational skills training. Therefore, there may be a direct relationship between employee socialization and employee retention. This deserves consideration and future research. Given the amount of time spent in the workplace in general, it is reasonable to suggest that a positive social environment is a far more desirable choice than a negative social environment. Abugre (2017) suggested that positive workplace relationships likely indicate intentions of organizational longevity. The author focused on cynicism as a psychological threat that is detrimental to organizational retention (Abugre, 2017). The statements of the participants regarding social experiences in the first 2 years of employment (Table 4) are in alignment with this literature.

Each of these novice teachers was forthcoming and honest in their discussion of social experiences within their schools. Their interview statements provided an authentic depiction of their thoughts and feelings regarding belonging within their work environment. The impact of the social environment has a far-reaching influence on novice teachers that deserves sincere consideration from both educational professionals and more specifically Industrial/Organizational Psychology professionals, inclusive of further research and exploration. While the focus of this dissertation is on an educational organization, generalizations could be made to employees within other employment settings as well. Utilization of professionals within the field of Industrial Organizational

Psychology could be beneficial to that end to provide further research to expand the population outside of educational organizations.

Novice teachers referred to the social interactions with some of the veteran teacher population as challenging. One of the reasons depicted for that was described as a disconnect between veteran and novice teachers, in some cases, due to age factors. Other participants described the veteran population as having issues with administration, while other viewpoints revealed the veteran teacher population as being fraught with drama. One participant's view of the veteran teacher population was that they simply were not happy with their jobs after being in the field for some time (Table 3 and Table 6). Four out of six participants described the veteran teacher population in a somewhat unflattering manner. Novice teachers need role models and mentors to guide them in the beginning of their careers. Veteran teachers are both formal and informal role models or mentors as potentially viewed by the novice teacher population. Mentoring influences all those involved in the process and is considered a social procedure (Kemmis et al., 2014). The type of mentoring provided could influence retention experiences for this population (Stanulis & Bell, 2017). Therefore, less than satisfying role models or mentors could be influential in a teacher's decision to stay or to leave the profession. Role models or mentors within the educational community can have a tremendous impact on a teacher's professional identity. As teacher identity in the workplace is developed through their experiences and school settings (Buchanan, 2015), role models for these teachers are essential. Educational leadership has a daunting task to choose those among veteran teaching staff who are proficient in the role of mentor (Martin et al., 2016). It is

apparent that the interactions between veteran and novice teachers greatly influence novice teachers' impressions of their work environment as well as their collegial relationships. As previously mentioned, positive work relationships are associated with retention (Abugre, 2017). As four of the six participants discussed their veteran teacher relationships as negative or "less than flattering," it is apparent that the choice of mentor and professional relationship are essential to retention for the novice teacher population (see Stanulis & Bell, 2017).

According to Thomas (2008), all members of society are group participants. If social identity is inherent where group situations and circumstances are present (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2014), identification of negative and exclusive faculty social environments is important to the proper induction of new teachers within the school environment. Educational leadership needs to take necessary steps to clear the air, if necessary, so that new teachers feel a sense of fit or belonging with their new workplaces.

Teacher lunch periods were mentioned by all participants in this study in relation to social influences and experiences. Lunch is a time, in almost any job or profession, where socialization is possible. The data showed two of the participants reported eating lunch alone, upon occasion, three of the participants ate lunch in their classrooms, one spent time in a team setting collaborating with colleagues, and one spent time in the faculty lunch room listening to other teachers argue (Table 3). In fact, two participants had been warned, prior to their first year experience, not to eat in the faculty lunchroom, if at all possible.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, organizational commitment requires more than stability (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The authors indicated that consequences of an employee remaining out of a sense of obligation (normative commitment) or necessity (continuance commitment), might disconnect the employee from commitment with their organization in general (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment (belonging or emotional commitment; Meyer & Allen, 1991) could be significant in the retention of novice teachers. Novice teachers expressed varied levels of social attachment to their organizations, and those participants who remain out of the need for security or obligation are most likely not in the profession for the long haul.

The theme of novice teacher support (Table 3) confirms and extends the current literature. Perception of social support has been linked to elevated levels of job satisfaction, job commitment, overall productivity, and employee wellbeing (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012). As such, social support in a professional setting can hold powerful influence in the workplace and a strong influential force in novice teacher retention. The participants in this study described their experiences with mentor support as being socially influential in some cases. A good mentor, in the descriptions of P1 and P2, has the ability to provide necessary support and encouragement for novice teachers. Consequently, those who are not supportive, as indicated by P5, or simply do not “show up,” as indicated by P3, can be detrimental to a teacher’s professional identity as the process of mentoring is considered to be social in nature and maintains a broad school-based influence (Kemmis et al., 2014). Positive collegial support of other teachers as mentioned by P3 provides similar supportive measures as indicated through the process

of mentoring. However, P6 shared that building relationships within the school setting is also necessary in order to reach collegial supportive levels.

Similarly, administrative support for the novice teacher population can produce the same effect as mentoring in some ways. Administrative support was strong within the school setting, according to the lived experience of P1, P3, and P6. Administration was not involved socially with the staff, according to P6. Logically, the dyad of supervisor and employee, in some cases, precludes socially based interaction. However, the positive experience of workplace support was noted by participants, which could enhance retention possibilities, as Elliot et al. (2017) determined from administrative support for formative novice teachers.

The theme of organizational decision-making (Table 3) confirms and extends the current literature for this study. The participants discussed in their lived experiences the importance of a good, capable mentor as being important to the decision-making process. The benefits of this type of mentoring have been noted in Chapter 2 and reiterated in Chapter 5, when discussing Theme 3: Novice teacher support, above. However, the discussion of the importance of being included or excluded in the process of organizational decision-making was discussed through the lived experiences of P2. Employee voice within their professional workplace is critical to the levels of comfort and ultimate satisfaction and how an employee might feel. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, inherent in our nature we are “feeling creatures first and thinking creatures second” (Nugent, 2017, p. 6). If an employee feels as if their opinion is not important to their organization, they will be hesitant to contribute and less likely to remain in the

situation. P4 expressed that seniority was the driving force behind decision-making within their schools, and P5 stated that specific individuals who dominate the decision-making process within their schools. These group dynamics could be intimidating for the first or second year teacher and potentially enough to influence a novice teacher's decision to remain or leave their circumstance. P4 expressed thoughts of possibly leaving in the future, and while P5 did leave one situation, due to issues of negative group dynamics, and is now planning on staying in a current situation due to a more positive relational workplace environment.

Viewed through the contextual frameworks of both the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and the Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012) it is apparent that the themes of Social Influences, Novice Teacher Support, and Organizational Decision-Making play a large role in the formation of teacher's self-concept. A teacher's self-concept is important to job satisfaction with the profession. (Zasytkin et al., 2015). Both teacher identity and self-concept are foundations for communications necessary to guide and direct novice teacher efficacy (Nielsen, 2016). The author also discussed this is a premise for teacher retention. Therefore, if a novice teacher's social experiences are mostly negative or prohibitive, that teacher is likely to form professional and social identities of a similar pattern. This social identity holds the potential to influence group dynamics (Reicher et al., 2012), which in turn might have serious consequences for organizational productivity.

The Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012) indicates that people categorize themselves that correspond to fit within a given group. Melton &

Cunningham (2014) indicated this could work for the benefit of a group and the person's self-concept. The teachers in this study identified lived social experiences of both a positive and negative nature, and as such might identify as either being included with the faculty or excluded from the faculty in general. Those who experienced positive social circumstances might be more motivated toward collaborative or organizational goals, finding more ways to contribute to organizational productivity, than those who experienced negative social circumstances. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Hogg (2006) suggested and Melton and Cunningham (2014) agreed that connections with in-group memberships are socially motivational.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: From the perspective of a novice teacher, what is the experience of decision-making in the workplace? This research question was created to focus on the lived experience of the novice teacher with regard to decision-making experienced in the workplace. The data analysis yielded two main themes for this research question; 1) Theme 1: Teaching Responsibilities, and 2) Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making. These themes confirm and extend knowledge within the field of teaching and education using the current literature described in Chapter 2.

The theme of Teaching Responsibilities both confirms and extends the literature. In terms of the lived experiences of the participants regarding teaching responsibilities, each demonstrated a unique perspective from their viewpoint. Some of the participants discussed decision-making as facilitated through mentor support (P1). The significance of positive mentor interactions, and the benefit thereof, are noted throughout the data for

this study. Input in the decision-making process is again mentioned under the theme of Teaching Responsibilities (P2). As previously mentioned in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, Albright et al., (2017) indicated higher levels of staff turnover are associated with teachers who believed their contributions in decision-making were limited in some way. P2 expressed the need to see how the next year progressed, before making any permanent career decisions. The discussion of overwhelming curricular decisions (P2), and related decision-making symbolizes the challenges faced by the novice teacher population. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) highlighted the importance of support on many levels for the novice teacher due the stressful circumstances encountered during that time frame. P3 mentioned that following directives was important in order to fulfill teaching responsibilities, and maintain job security, which is characteristic of Meyer and Allen's (1991) organizational commitment out of necessity or continuance commitment (Bergman, 2006). Participants also discussed the influence of a board of education (P4) in terms of "gate-keeping" proposals for curricular programs initiated by novice teachers. Working with novice teacher new ideas and curricular proposals would enhance novice teacher voice within the school environment. This could prove motivational for novice teachers, and empower their sense of professional identity, as well as possibilities of novice teacher retention. The presence of specific influential teachers in the workplace (P5) might be viewed by other faculty members as favoritism. Whether those involved are aware of their actions, or not, perceptions of the other faculty members are important to organizational collaboration. Novice teachers might categorize others as in the "circle of influence group" and find themselves outside that circle. This is in line with the Social

Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012). As previously mentioned, novice teacher's require support during their initial teaching experiences (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017), and disorganization within organizational decision-making processes, as described in the experience of P6, has the potential to confuse and frustrate novice teachers who are unfamiliar with the workings of their new environment. If these novice teachers believe they are left to their own to make decisions and solve problems, they might not develop healthy commitment to their organization, much less Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Organ & Ryan, 1995).

In terms of Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making in relation to Research Question 2, this theme confirms the current literature. Participants discussed similar issues, as noted in previous thematic patterns, however the focus was centered on both positive and negative aspects of administrative involvement. Interventions enacted by educational leaders have been proven to remediate behaviors involving retention of novice teachers. (Kelly & Northrop, 2015). One participant adamantly spoke about administration's lack of inclusion of novice teachers in important organizational matters. It is apparent that administrative involvement and support in organizational decision-making has the potential to significantly influence the novice teacher population. Influence of the union was discussed within this theme as part of organizational decision-making. One participant expressed experiencing social pressure to join union efforts within their current school settings. Social pressures of this sort are intimidating to new staff members, and in the case of the participant involved, the incident was truly impactful. The participant expressed being undecided about a future teaching in that

school setting. Conversely, another participant spoke regarding a positive and supportive union intervention in that participant's school setting. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2 and in earlier in this Chapter, employee voice and the ability to express professional opinion in organizational decisions is significant to matters of retention. Novice teacher voices should not only be encouraged by administration, but by the educational community as a whole. Interventions of this sort reassure the novice teacher population in their formative teaching years that support is available and they, as new employees, are included and that they are vital within the membership of their organizations.

This research question and related thematic data viewed through the contextual frameworks of both the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and the Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012) provides insight development of teacher identity and organizational belonging to Teaching Responsibilities, and Organizational Decision-Making. To briefly summarize Research Question 2 through the contextual framework of this study, professional identity can be strengthened through professional and social collaborations within the workplace environment. As the novice teacher population make decisions regarding prospects and opportunities in their profession based on social prompts (Pogodzinski, 2015), the types of social contexts in which a novice teacher works can be extremely influential in formation of teacher concepts regarding retention. Administrators acknowledgement and tolerance of influential staff members over other faculty within the workplace could be considered favoritism. According to the Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et

al., 2012), could possibly result in novice teachers placing themselves in an “out group” status, negating both social identity and organizational commitment potential.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: At what point do novice teachers become aware of social influence in relation to decision-making in the workplace? This research question was created to identify the time period of awareness with regard to social influences experienced in the workplace. The data analysis yielded two main themes for this research question; 1) Theme 2: Social Experiences, 2) Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making. These themes confirm knowledge within the field of teaching and education using the with current literature as described in Chapter 2.

The theme of Social Experiences confirms the current literature for this research. The lived experiences of each participant in this study describe, some with detail, their social experiences within their workplaces. As the target population for this study includes novice teachers who are in their first or second year of teaching service, it is apparent the answer to the research question is that novice teachers become aware of social influence within both the first and second years of their career. As previously mentioned, the timeframe for tenure in the State of New Jersey is a period or 4 years and 1 day for teachers (NJPSA, n.d.), and this is a long timeframe of organizational newness as an employee. Immersion in workplaces that have highly charged social experiences, such as the experiences discussed by P2, P4, and P5, are not conducive to retention in the long run. According to Adams and Woods (2015) teacher retention issues could be connected to teacher socialization or lack thereof. In terms of the above mentioned

participant's plans to remain in their current employment situation, P2 was undecided and expressed the desire to see how the next year progressed before making a decision, P4 expressed the possibility of leaving in about 3 or 4 years, to pursue higher education goals, and P5 did leave and expressed a challenging school situation after the first year, and is currently satisfied in a new school setting. Therefore, it would be remiss to negate social experiences as potential determinants of novice teacher's intentions to remain in their profession, and more prudent to view them in the light of potential qualifiers of novice teacher retention.

The theme of Organizational Decision-Making confirms current literature for this study. Social unanimity has been directly associated with levels of quality within the decision-making process (Grossman, 2014). Heightened levels of social discord within an employment situation might prove impactful for organizational productivity, due to the inability to implement quality decisions. Further, employee frustration with organization dissonance might further intentions to leave the employment circumstance. Novice teachers hold out aspirations that they will become positive contributors to decision-making within their schools, according to Hökkä, and Eteläpelto (2014), and Albright et al., (2017), indicated that employee turnover levels are associated with teachers who felt as if their ability to contribute to organizational decisions was restricted.

This research question and related thematic data viewed through the contextual frameworks of both the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012), provides awareness of the potential effect of social influences as perceived by the novice teacher population in the

first two years of their career. Novice teachers place value on their ability to be included in both the social aspect and decision-making processes of their school (Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2014; Albright et al., 2017). Teachers form their professional identity through social interactions, which is a necessity in order to formulate in a positive and productive manner (Rice et al., 2015). A social environment that is not conducive to the development of positive social and collegial relationships would be harmful to teacher development of social and professional identity.

According to the Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012), similar to perspectives of Research Question 2, novice teachers might consider themselves to be outside of organizational influence, and as such not important to organizational functioning in general.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4: What role does social influence and group or team-based decision-making play in the novice teacher's perspective to remain in the teaching profession? This research question was created to focus on the lived experience of the novice teacher with regard to social influences, group or team-based decision-making experienced in the workplace. The data analysis yielded three main themes for this research question; 1) Theme 2: Social Experiences, 2) Theme 4: Organizational Decision-Making, and 3) Theme 5: Career Longevity and Retention. These themes confirm, and extend knowledge within the field of teaching and education using the with current literature as described in Chapter 2.

The themes of Social Experiences, Organizational Decision-Making and Career Longevity will be interpreted together for purposes of this study. This research question represents the core of the conducted research, and these themes, together, symbolize the intent and purpose for which this study was created. Interpretation of the results of these together allow for perspective on the overarching topic of novice teacher retention. These themes confirm and extend the current literature. According to the lived experiences of the participants of this study, and respective answers to Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 of this study the keen awareness of social experiences and organizational decision-making within the school setting is influential in several ways for the novice teacher population. Therefore, the answer to Research Question 4 follows from the data, evidence and lived experiences of each one of the participants 1-6 within this research. The answers to determine the respective roles of both social influences and team-based decision-making in a novice teacher's intention to remain in the profession are as varied as the social circumstances within each novice teacher's experience. Social experiences and related influences within a given school setting have the power to provide supportive measures that encourage teacher retention, such as novice teacher mentoring, or collegial support, novice teacher induction programs, and administrative leadership support (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Kemmis et al., 2014; Pogodzinski, 2015). Conversely, non-productive measures within any of the above mentioned contexts have the potential to create circumstances that are not likely to encourage novice teacher retention.

In relation to team based or group decision-making, with regards to a novice teacher's intention to remain in the profession, the answer is a bit less complex. Inclusion

or exclusion in major decision-making processes within the school setting appears to be a significant aspect or condition that has the potential to influence a novice teacher in a positive or negative manner. Those participants within the study that discussed feeling left out of decisions that involved themselves or their students in some way, shape or form, described negative feelings related to those decisions. Some of these participants expressed undecided plans for a future with their current school districts. The outcomes of retention in the cases of these participants remain to be seen, however the expressions of those novice teachers were made known during this study. Novice teacher voice and the ability of expression within the workplace, according to Stanulis and Bell (2017), is imperative to both novice teacher retention and the achievement of their students.

In raising awareness of the need to include teachers within decision-making processes that impact their daily functioning and their students, organizations have a better chance to increase affective organizational commitment, according to Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick (2006) and foster organizational citizenship behaviors for their employees.

The thematic data viewed through the contextual frameworks of both the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth, 2016; Pinder, 2008), and Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher, et al., 2012), indicate that social experiences, as experienced by the novice teacher population positive or negative have the potential to either enhance or diminish both the self-esteem and social identity of the novice teachers involved. Social interactions and related dynamics are imperative to formation of teacher identity (Rice et al., 2015).

Viewed in the perspective of the Social Categorization Theory (SCT) (Reicher et al., 2012), novice teachers, without positive social circumstances within the workplace, might consider themselves to be isolated or left on their own to solve novice teacher challenges.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the use of a one-time interview. The interview illustrates one “snapshot” in time, and future research will be required to fully develop an understanding of social influences, decision-making and other similar issues surrounding novice teacher retention.

Additionally, specific grade level and content areas not represented by participating teachers could also be considered a limitation of this research. This study included the K-8 novice teacher population in public school settings. Further, this study was inclusive of public schools, only. Private school setting or charter school settings were not used for purposes of this research.

This study focused primarily on the geographic area of Northern New Jersey, which could be considered a limitation of this research when considering the State of New Jersey as a whole. All geographic areas within the State of New Jersey are not represented in this research. Additionally, other states within the United States are not represented within the study. The research is inclusive only of the geographic area of Northern New Jersey, and as such may not be representative of other states within the United States or other countries.

Lastly, qualitative studies have limitations related to generalization, as qualitative studies are not expected to provide generalizations (Burkholder et al., 2016). As the value of qualitative research is in description and the themes generated in a given context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), this research is a beginning that offers rich data, and the potential for future research opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommendations for future research considerations. The first recommendation for future research is to conduct similar qualitative studies with expansion of geographic location setting to include a representation from each county within the State of New Jersey. The second recommendation, although somewhat more challenging, is to conduct similar qualitative research on a national level, including populations from each state within the United States, to provide a national perspective for comparison. Also, additional studies of qualitative and quantitative research design would allow for more specified data regarding social influences and decision-making with regard to novice teacher retention. Finally, it is apparent from this study that school culture and climate are connected to potential for novice teacher retention possibilities. Research studies that focus on individual school climate and culture, and explore other populations within the public school setting, such as administration, the veteran teacher population, and novice teacher mentors, will identify areas of improvement that could be beneficial in the enhancement of novice teacher retention.

Implications

Positive Social Change

Meaningful data in this study on the lived experiences of novice teachers, specifically surrounding social influences and decision-making, provides insight into a new teacher's perception of their first two years of service in their respective careers. This information is critical to the creation of work environments where new teachers believe they are positive contributors to the educational community. By openly discussing perceptions of novice teachers, areas of dissatisfaction can be potentially aired, and remediations can be identified to potentially prevent premature departure of these teachers. Additionally, this research offers the opportunity to open venues of expression for the novice teacher voice within the workplace, that might not be heard in a workplace setting where they could feel intimidated or uncomfortable. This study offers possibilities of revising revisit novice teacher trainings and induction procedures to tailor these measures to meet the expressed and voiced needs of the population. Lastly, positive change garnered from this research could provide opportunity to revisit new teacher tenure practices in the State of New Jersey. As previously mentioned, tenure in the State of New Jersey is a four-year and one day period of time (NJPSA, n.d.). This is a long timeframe in which to be considered "new" as compared to other organizational induction periods. Perhaps, revision, and alternatives are necessary, in order to promote novice teacher retention within the State of New Jersey.

Conclusion

New teachers come to the first day of their teaching career with hopefulness, and desire to make a positive impact in the lives of their students and general educational community (Manuel & Carter, 2016). Certainly, there are positive and negative circumstances within the novice teacher experience demonstrated across the five themes within the data gathered for this study. Should a novice teacher's experience be represented by strong mentor support (P1, and P2), collegial relationships (P3), group support (P4 and P5), and administrative support (P6), chances are the teacher will choose to remain in the teaching profession. However, if a novice teachers' primary experiences are represented by; isolation (P2), intimidation (P5), shunning (P2, P5), unnecessary drama (P4, P5), being brought to the point of tears (P5), fear (P5), and being told to leave the field of teaching by other professionals (P6) then the reasons to leave appear plentiful and the reasons to stay are few and far between. The ramifications of professional career issues for these young teachers are many, and consequences for organizational productivity are staggering.

Leadership in the field of Education must take a stance to support the novice teacher population in different and more effective ways. This is not said lightly, nor without thought, as most educational administrators do support their new teachers, overall. The core of the circumstances expressed by the novice teachers in this study is an outcome of this study that should be examined by educational leadership, in order to promote retention in the novice teacher population.

Teachers are the foundation for organizational success within their respective schools on a daily basis (Imran et al., 2017), and as such, the problems related to teacher attrition and retention deserve serious attention from the educational community. The consequences of novice teacher attrition have been documented, discussed, and reviewed throughout this research, as the departure of young, qualified teachers is harmful to the educational community.

The perspective of Industrial-Organizational Psychology would be advantageous and perhaps eye-opening for the field of Education in order to better examine novice teacher attrition and retention issues. The addition of the viewpoint of Industrial-Organizational Psychology would allow experts to create the opportunity for both professions to explore new and innovative ways to support, develop and cultivate our young teacher population, and in turn, improve the continuity of teaching and learning for the benefit of the students within their charge.

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Appendix A: Researcher Interview Script

Researcher (before interview questions):

I am interested in learning more about how decisions are made in your school. I am also interested in your individual perceptions of your influence on those decisions compared to other staff members in within the educational community, such as teachers who have been here longer, building administration staff members, central administration staff members, or any other staff member within the educational community.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your experience of being a new teacher in this school?
2. Please describe how decisions are made in your school from your perspective.
3. Are there particular individuals or groups who are especially influential when decisions that affect teachers are being made?
4. What is your experience with social groups or cliques among the administration, faculty and staff members?
5. What are your thoughts regarding longevity at your school?
6. Please describe the social environment among teachers at your school.
7. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experiences with decision-making within your school setting as a teacher?

Possible Prompts:

- a. Can you give me an example of that?
- b. Can you expand on what you just said?
- c. Can you tell me how that works?
- d. Can you tell me more about that?